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APPROACHING INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE



UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI  
INSTITUTE OF BEHAVIOURAL SCIENCES

# **APPROACHING INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE**

**COMPLEXITIES OF THE RESEARCH PROCESSES**

JUAN CARLOS LLORENTE  
KARI KANTASALMI  
JUAN DE DIOS SIMÓN

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Editors

Juan Carlos Llorente  
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Helsinki 2010

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# PREFACE

Juan de Dios Simón





## Preface

The need to guarantee a focus on human rights is brought up in the strategic planning<sup>1</sup> of the EIBAMAZ project, as well as the importance of the indigenous peoples' principles of thought in guiding the management and development of the project. Although the incorporation of the indigenous thinking generated support among colleagues and counterparts, it also provoked adverse comments.

Some people told us that we were naive, that the approaches we had were only philosophical outlines which had nothing to do with the pragmatic and operative. On the other hand, to our surprise, pragmatic indigenous activists indicated to us that clearly defining the indigenous principles as central themes of the project could generate perverse incentives among the indigenous peoples and could contradict other principles of individual human rights. In addition to these comments, we also learned that in Guatemala, the people who began the research process with dedication, wishing to incorporate the voice of the elders and indigenous spiritual guides, were labeled as "spokespersons for fundamentalism" or "subversive purists". "How was it possible that the Mayan knowledge was made public and validated before coming under the scrutiny of the principal scientists?" exclaimed some people in Guatemala.

After three years of work, from our perspective, having been involved in the processes, and after the approval of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in September 2007, we understood that each contrary argument and opinion was used to double the research work efforts. Now we are on the right path, coherent with the mandate of cooperating financially and technically to achieve the collective rights of the indigenous peoples.

We have witnessed that the basic idea of "I am you and you are me, we are part of the same fabric, we are part of the Earth and it is a part of us, we are part of the Universe and we are part of a whole", became alive, in interviews, seminars, talks, and in each decision made, due to the fact that the intercultural focus was not confined to the level of coexistence between different people, but considered, among other things, political multidimensionality, territory, collective rights, and worldview. The principles of order and duties, harmony and equilibrium, natural and cosmic unity, complementarity and duality, which appear in EIBAMAZ's regional strategic planning, were not just mere words written in an irrelevant document. In effect, they formed a guid-

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<sup>1</sup> Planeación y Gestión Estratégica de EIBAMAZ Regional, 2007 (EIBAMAZ's regional strategic planning and administration)

ing instrument that oriented and helped us to facilitate and promote our research, the academic exchange of knowledge, epistemological dialogues, training of researchers of indigenous origin, as well as the production of materials, respecting the worldview, traditional knowledge and wisdom, language, culture, science, technology, values, ethics, and esthetics of the indigenous peoples.

I wish to share in this preface a description of the process from a regional perspective, with an indigenous and intercultural point of view (double point of view), including what has been implemented to date and future challenges. I will try to mention the good decisions we have made but also the aspects that we must improve, as well as those who have been facilitating and participating in the processes.

I will comment on the research work achieved by three state universities together with the indigenous peoples of the Bolivian, Ecuadorian, and Peruvian Amazonian region, and one private Jesuit university which worked with the Mayan tribe of Guatemala, linking them to regional efforts and political action. I offer my personal opinion, as a regional participant, connected to the work accomplished with the Mayan people and the tribes of the South-American Amazonian region. It is also a view of someone who keeps an eye on and participates in the movement of the indigenous peoples of the world, clearly recognizing the arduous and honest work of allied non-indigenous "academics", who seek justice and full respect of human and collective rights of children and peoples.

## 1 The actual long term challenges in time and space

The process covered in the research applied to bilingual and intercultural education in Guatemala, Bolivia, Ecuador, and Peru has permitted, in good measure, to visualize the traditional knowledge and wisdom of the indigenous peoples within a framework of quality education, sensitive to diversity, and contributing to the intercultural epistemological dialogue at all levels. In the meetings with universities sponsored by the regional EIBAMAZ-UNICEF project, with the participation of PROEIMCA-PNUD, we were introduced to the work each university was realizing in order to achieve the clear and specific pragmatic objectives, and also to the planning requirements for results. However, we understood that our immediate objectives were not the most pressing ones, since there was another dynamic that the reality of the communities, families, peoples, and the political events of each country demanded

from us. We realized that these were the long term significant factors in time and space.

As the different participant universities (Universidad Landívar of Guatemala, Universidad de Cuenca of Ecuador, Universidad Mayor de San Simón of Bolivia, and Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos of Peru) designed, implemented, and processed the research results, and completed the training of Amazonian indigenous researchers, parallel practical and theoretical challenges emerged. For example, it was discovered that it was not enough to utilize the scientific method and the variables of causality, objectivity, rigor, and validity, but it was also necessary to investigate with the heart, the five senses, the intuition, the mind in connection with the spirit, and the language of nature (reflected in the seasons, the climate, the sound of water, the call of animals, etc.) on the one hand and the collective language of the tribes on the other.

How to achieve this without the orientation of the wise old men and women or the researchers of indigenous origin? How to adopt these methods if the universities, instead of teaching traditional indigenous knowledge and wisdom, are still learning from the indigenous tribes, because in terms of cognitive contents, there was an omission and exclusion of indigenous knowledge in their classrooms?

## **2 The beginning of the dialogue between “wisdom” and the “academic world”**

In connection with the field work visits and permanent dialogues between the researchers and the sources of communitarian knowledge, those responsible for the research understood that, from a “Western” investigation format, they were facing an academic rupture in treating what is “indigenous” and a clear practical difficulty of systemizing a series of central questions for treating all things indigenous. In this sense, we can think about a systematic organization of the influence of cosmic energies upon the indigenous world in terms of the emotions, the living and thus changing according to time and space, the permanent experience of spiritual codes, sacred colors, territory, collective learning, and the existence of the “Nawal or nahual”.

In the words of the organizations that conducted the work, it was the beginning of the dialogue between “wisdom” and the “academic world”, a dialogue that led to practices, and practices that turned into dialogues. This process was impelled by permanent observations to clarify, with academic hon-

esty, the best way of documenting the traditional knowledge and wisdom of the peoples, based on any topic: the history of a territory or culture, the development of a communitarian curriculum, or the genuine effort to train Amazonian indigenous persons with graduate degrees.

This framework was originally just a discourse. We had always heard, in a critic or auto-critic manner, of the foundations of postmodernism that criticized the slavery of modern man, with the "Western" translated as the working of machines and technology, and rejected the predominance of so called "science". But in practice, the Amazonian and Mayan participants, men and women, virtually analphabet in Spanish, without previous knowledge of postmodern currents, but full of traditional skills and wisdom, placed emphasis on the plurality of opinions and of methods. They said an emphatic "no" to the Western cultural hegemony and challenged the academics to stop reproducing and disseminating a sole vision of the research. Participation in the EIBAMAZ and PROEIMCA projects led the academic world to a situation in which, perhaps for the very first time, its members were confronted with technical and operative challenges in connection with participants that not only protested, but also made a profound reflection on proposals about and for the research from a spiral way of thinking. If we as those who possess historical responsibility for coordinating these programs both in national and regional level had not understood this process, the results would have been quite different.

From Guatemala, we heard voices such as: let us not forget to ask permission from indigenous authorities as well as from the authorities and guardians of the Universe, before embarking on the research. In other words, we were given an invitation to contemplate living spirituality. In terms of traditional knowledge and wisdom, the Mayans said that we had to be careful in our aspiration of systemizing and giving an order to the indigenous world, because an attempt to arrange it based on the structures and variables of Western research would possibly mean disordering and distorting the practical integral and spiral way of thinking associated with the tribes' worldview. Hence, they conveyed to us, it was better to talk about an attempt to document, not systemize, given that we could be unimaginably far from actually achieving that and are possibly not even able to finish the work that was already accomplished by their forefathers. They also warned us that discussing indigenous themes before 1996 was not politically viable. Those "Indian" ideas were considered subversive. This resulted in precaution among the researchers, but not astonishment of the almost systematic negation of indigenous knowledge,

negation of the languages, cultures, and indigenous tribes in the State and the universities' structures.

Among the observations coming from the universities of Bolivia, Ecuador, and Peru, we heard voices that said that it was not necessary to make the research compatible with the projects of training indigenous human resources orientated towards the construction of a pluri-cultural and pluri-national State. They showed us another concept of interculturality, based on a horizontal relation between cultural knowledge and the management of economic, political, social, and cultural power. This is to say, they did not want that the research would turn into a Trojan horse for continuing to impose Western models on native peoples' territories. This gave rise to the necessity for the indigenous peoples themselves to study their own roots, document their own traditional knowledge and wisdom. Thus, the program for the training of Amazonian indigenous persons with a degree specialized in research was consolidated.

On the other hand, they told us that at the local level, the epistemological calendars and maps of the seasons were in harmony with both the biological development of the indigenous person and the cultural and spiritual practices of the indigenous peoples, and that these were united with their territory. This was not taught in any university degree course. Through the dialogues that were organized, we saw the need to treat the rights of the author and intellectual rights of the indigenous knowledge and wisdom that is hundreds and possibly thousands of years old. Who should get credit in terms of collective knowledge? The research and its participants raised the question of how to decolonize the knowledge and promote interculturality between peoples. Moreover, they invited others to re-conceptualize the themes of the development and quality of education, contrasting them with "good living", "the fullness of life", and the need to build bridges between the multiple concepts of quality and the worldview of the indigenous tribes.

This process, the dialogue between Western knowledge and millennial indigenous wisdom, was fascinating. But how to use it to make a positive impact on children? The researchers came forward with their proposals, in operative levels of each country and region, and then we transferred them to frameworks with objectives, linked with activities and their corresponding financial budgets.

### 3 The first findings in the dialogue between Western knowledge and millennial indigenous wisdom

The initial findings indicated that indigenous education was endogenous and appropriate, even if it was not provided schooling for, but it possessed an order, it was formal, and planned, but different to traditional “school”. The Amazonians repeatedly told us that we should change the term “school” to communitarian education center, because the idea was that this centre resided within a community, within a territory, within collectivities that could be bilingual, multilingual, multiethnic, and multicultural. The idea was to transform the school that stripped the indigenous children of their identity, culture, and language, to an education center in which the parents of the family, the community, and the people responsible for the education would participate. In this way, the values and identity of the tribes would be strengthened, their self-esteem would be elevated, more children would remain in classrooms, they would better learn in terms of collectivity, and there would be transmission, regaining, and creation of new educational knowledge. With each step taken in the implementation of interviewing methodologies, following the chronogram established in each country, the indigenous participants explained that we should not divide the education and interaction of childhood, family, and community knowledge. Along the way, we heard that one form of making the universities intercultural was to create mechanisms of exception, so that indigenous wise old men and women and guides could teach and do research in the universities. It was also voiced that faculties and/or academic unities not specifically dedicated to pedagogic questions could take up topics linked to indigenous knowledge and wisdom. Furthermore, the theses of students from diverse professional areas could also be written in their mother language (for example connecting them to indigenous architecture, medicine, customary law, political and social organization, philosophy, etc.). In general, there was a demand for providing tools to the training of indigenous researchers, helping them to maintain their indigenous worldview and their link to the political and social movement of the indigenous peoples in favor of IBE.

Thus, the aim of the research was not to conduct just another research, accomplish a thesis, publish a book, or simply use it as a requirement to achieve new financing. On the contrary, it brought about the beginning of an understanding that other methodologies and epistemological categories of life exist, that we cannot continue with the same thinking of *subject-object* to develop this kind of research. In fact, it reaffirms the existence of wisdom that has

guided the peoples to reproduce their own culture, to apply their knowledge collectively, and to maintain a harmony with the environment. Furthermore, in view of the results, it is possible to visualize the exclusions and injustices that the indigenous Mayan and Amazonian peoples have suffered and continue to suffer, at all levels, including the lack of indigenous knowledge within the universality of the universities.

We faced the need to form an academic connection with political processes, both being interdependent in the life of the indigenous tribes. The involvement and participation of the University of Helsinki and the Finnish Government in the process, even without being direct or indirect participants in the research work, promoted the development of a direct dialogue with the monitoring council of the two regional programs, as well the incorporation of guidelines to the agreement between UNICEF or PNUD and the universities of Cuenca, Universidad Mayor de San Simon, Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos, and Universidad Rafael Landivar, respectively.

During the research process, various agreements were reached with education authorities such as DINEIB in Ecuador, the department of education of Ucayali, the Ministry of Education of Bolivia, and with DIGEBI of Guatemala, as well as with indigenous organizations in each country. Perhaps from the regional point of view of the EIBAMAZ project and in view the facts obtained by the PROEIMCA program, there is still plenty of work to be done. We have not achieved an ideal situation in order to manage a research project conducted *from the point of view and with* the indigenous peoples due to the epistemological and procedural analphabetism of the application of indigenous wisdom in the universities, and also because of a lack of indigenous human resources with a university degree working in universities.

Yet, it was undoubtedly a step forward in the process of changing the very roots of the mode of conducting research on the indigenous, by the indigenous, for the indigenous. With the resources and clarity of ideas, we did not want to continue without the indigenous peoples and much less favoring only the Western view. And that dictatorship was and still is visible, when we see the effective blockades against any conceptual attempt or theoretical proposal that comes to the surface. The Western tradition and its defenders try to wipe out all knowledge that is not compatible with science, technology, and social sciences. Furthermore, its authoritarian demands on theoretical referents and research techniques and methods is apparent, or the bibliographical references plagued by the views of European philosophers and social scientists who somehow validate permanently the Western tradition in what we call research. This is something we have proven in our research experience.



Having said this, we observed that in the works produced by the universities, in addition to the tales and accounts, there was contemplation and comprehension, evidence and experience of the indigenous epistemology, based on traditional wisdom. That is to say, researchers managed to understand that the indigenous epistemology, both Amazonian and Guatemalan Mayan, does not aspire and not necessarily even wish to become equal with the epistemology presented by the Western modernity, based on the scientific knowledge of the last 300 years. Moreover, the universities' products reaffirm the philosophy of the traditional knowledge and wisdom of millennial indigenous civilizations, useful for all, including all beings and nature. This assertion is not a simple superficial view, as it takes into consideration the domination of the epistemological, political, economical, social, and religious thinking imposed for centuries on indigenous tribes (domination imposed in some cases by the Spanish, in other by the English, French, German, or North Americans). Indigenous knowledge has always gone hand in hand with a live spirituality. The essence of the indigenous worldview has remained unchanged during centuries. Indeed, there are immutable mythical moulds, giving full spiritual and material satisfaction to the desires of the tribes. Thus, it is not strange that the indigenous peoples harbor non-Western concepts of happiness, development, and fullness of life, based on their own perspective.

## 4 Contributions of EIBAMAZ and PROEIMCA in the process

The regional EIBAMAZ project gave an unquestionable contribution in bringing about an enormous change in the research financed by international cooperation and accompanied by national and international partners. Hence, no one spared any effort in order to realize the exchange of information to know what each country was doing and to rise to the challenge of working together. Also, in a planned manner, academic exchange was realized with PROEIMCA. The regional contribution to the counties and the support of the countries to a regional work agenda were implemented gradually, which meant overcoming some administrative challenges. Although confronting difficulties (which we will treat in another chapter), the indigenous participants became enthusiastic about conducting the research in their language, despite the limited written processes. In the first and second phase of the research of "Encantamiento de la Realidad" ("The Enchantment of Reality"), also called "the practices of Mayan Mesoamerican civilization", the Universidad Rafael Landívar and

PROEIMCA invited local authorities to join, utilized the concept of *the land as a person*, and studied spiritual guides who cure everyone physically and spiritually. As a result, they documented the Mayan sacred worlds, territory and economy, social and political organization, mathematics, communication, and art, all in an enchanted manner.

In Bolivia, Ecuador, and Peru, the merest idea of not discussing having conversations with and interviewing the elderly and communitarian guides, was considered an incomplete approach and an aberration. The research coordinators of all the countries recognized and asserted in each presentation that the indigenous ancestral contribution and knowledge bases could form a contribution to humanity in view of the environmental, energy, food, and oil crisis, caused in particular by "Western" thinking. "A new world is possible!" they proclaimed to us from Central America. In that sense, the themes on the Amazonian knowledge and skills, time and space, land and territory, natural cycles, and other topics were approached in a strategic manner, bearing in mind that the indigenous knowledge did not remain subordinated to structures that responded to the hegemony of a recycled or auto-regulation of the model of Western knowledge. Yet, this research begs the question, how many will understand that it was a question of constructing an epistemological interculturality and not a feeling of inferiority? How many will understand that it was not a question of trying to become equal or measure oneself with parameters belonging to other sciences, but rather a genuine attempt at understanding the energies of the whole and the bases of knowledge, not the ideologies of one versus the others?

This means that when the United Nations organisations (PNUD and UNICEF) and the Finnish Government signed, in 2005, cooperation agreements that symbolized the onset of regional projects such as EIBAMAZ and PROEMBI-PROEIMCA, they were very far from imagining the results and challenges that this research initiative applied to IBE would generate, from its process and work with 18 Amazonian peoples of Bolivia, Ecuador, and Peru, and four principally Mayan linguistic communities of Guatemala.



Chapter 1

# OBSERVING EDUCATIONAL KNOWLEDGE BETWEEN EDUCATION AND SCHOOLING

Kari Kantasalmi  
Juan Carlos Llorente



## Summary

In this article we want to combine two very different starting points for observing the observations and analysis of indigenous knowledge in settings that aim to produce educationally relevant knowledge to be considered in the context of schooling. On the basis of the descriptions presented in the chapters of this book we have decided to bring together two suggestions for rethinking the IBE as a Latin American educational phenomenon. First, we want to introduce ideas for an approach by pointing to comparative historical sociology of educational change. Second, we want to point to the studies of everyday practices. In the aim of bridging these two we want to emphasize the need of reflecting processes in the light of societal and social theory. By means of such reflections we aim at pointing to the needs in theoretically controlled moves between contexts of different sizes. We start in point 2 with the distinction of education and schooling to move then to the observation of everyday practices in point 3. We finalise with some remarks which may help for rethinking the strategies for producing educational knowledge aiming at the inclusion of indigenous peoples to the procedures of schooling.

## Acknowledgements

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## 1 Introduction

In this article we want to combine two very different starting points for observing the observations and analysis of indigenous knowledge in settings that aim to produce educationally relevant knowledge to be considered in the context of schooling. We are arguing for rethinking the strategies for producing educational knowledge aiming at the inclusion of indigenous peoples to the system of schooling, which orientates according to its global reference problems. In Latin America the discourse in this problem area has for some decades concentrated on the topic of intercultural bilingual education (IBE), but with certain disciplinary overtones in approaches. Most commonly the com-

plexity of the phenomenon IBE has been made as a theme of observation from the linguistic and anthropological points of view. Enhancing educational solutions in practices of schooling has, however, made clearer the need for questioning the offered viewpoints in observing indigenous inclusion problems. In our view, IBE as a discourse offers a source of inspiration for the rethinking of the relevant educational knowledge – its limits and possibilities – in what we see as a multidisciplinary endeavour. The recent developments in the regeneration of indigenous peoples' rights point to the need of considering the wider horizon of social sciences and possibilities offered for the education system's internal observing of the complexity involved in IBE as a societal phenomenon.

On the basis of the descriptions presented in the chapters of this book we have decided to bring together two different starting points as our suggestion for rethinking the IBE as a Latin American educational phenomenon. We believe that departing from the educational phenomenon entails breaking pre-conceived disciplinary boundaries. Aiming at the multidisciplinary unfolding of the complexity that has been gradually concentrated in IBE points to the need of observers being informed of social and societal theory. These fields of theory construction can support the required disciplinary crossovers, which we understand as the necessary convergence of conceptual terms. Such systematisations of descriptions in research communications relates to differentiating levels of observation. In this article we want to discuss the varying means of observing the strategies used in observing indigenous knowledge practices from the point of view of producing educational knowledge with relevance to schooling. In a way we are looking at the observations presented in chapters of this book from a different angle. In pursuit of varying levels of observations we depart from two different discursive traditions and try to bring them together. On the one hand we want to introduce ideas for an approach by pointing to comparative historical sociology of educational change. On the other, we want to point to the studies of everyday practices. In the aim of bridging these two we want to emphasize the need of reflecting processes in the light of societal and social theory. By means of such reflections we aim at pointing to the needs in theoretically controlled moves between contexts of different sizes.

In what follows, our intentions are to show alternate points of required rethinking rather than providing worked-out solutions. The key notions are systems, fields, and social practices. We believe that societal aspects in IBE point to thinking through theorizing social systems or fields of social practices.

When it comes to observing contexts of everyday practices in the IBE phenomenon, it should be possible to transfer the observations produced in the local educational settings to the wider contexts of schooling with societal connections. This poses questions concerning the ways of recognizing the involvement of different kinds of educational knowledge within the inclusion of indigenous peoples. We believe this incorporation of different knowledge forms is possible to grasp by emphasizing communication or activity as basic units of the social systems. In global terms, however, we view the notion of world society as developed in systems theory of Niklas Luhmann as a promising entry point. As far as the organisation of schooling is concerned, it is more difficult to decide whether systems theory with a focus on communication (Luhmann), or theorizing of social fields (Pierre Bourdieu) from the point of view of practices, with a focus on cultural forms and relational agency, would offer more epistemological advantages. We take this as an open question while we offer illustrations for thinking IBE through the distinction of education and schooling. We aim at commenting on the contexts which are presented in this book. We are not drawing conclusions, but rather making observations in pursuit of further discussion.

## 2 The distinction of schooling and education

### 2.1 Theoretical issues in grasping the semantics and structuration of practices in IBE

When analysing the phenomenon known in Latin America as *educación intercultural bilingüe* – the intercultural bilingual education (IBE) – it is fruitful to distinguish between practices of *schooling* and *education*, and try to maintain the distinction systematically. Bluntly stated, the former refers to those standardized sequences of tuition and studying which offer possibilities for certifications recognized within society. <sup>1</sup>The mechanism of recognised certification is fundamental to the distinction. It raises the need for elaborating theoretically and empirically what society is. The claim here is that the distinction

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<sup>1</sup> By society we do not necessarily mean the nation-states but also organisations smaller and bigger than that. For Luhmann (1997) the society encloses all possible social systems. Ultimately there is only one world society that has been in a gradually intensified manner structuring social processes for more than 500 years. We take this as a promising point of departure in thinking about the complexity of IBE as societal education and schooling phenomenon.



education/schooling becomes conceptually relevant above all in modern society. Schooling is more specific to modernity while the notion of education applies to a wider variety of practices ranging from formative ends to everyday situations of socialization present in all historically known societies.

Learning is part of human evolution. In this sense it is a capability. Most generally, within social practices of education and schooling, learning is viewed as a potential with social possibilities to be actualised in historically acceptable ways and to certain historically defined ends. Aspects of schooling and education manifest occasional overlapping of semantics in localities of socially and societally structured practices of ongoing daily life and related communication. Thus it is important to try to maintain the analytical distinction systematically when analysing phenomenon like IBE. The distinction education/schooling is primarily analytical for it always presumes some way of constructing the society – from communication or from activity. It is the construction of society which offers the variety of meanings for recognizing the validity of the certifications necessary for those abstract societal effects which we relate to schooling.

To some extent the abstractness of the certificate is comparable to that of money. In this sense diplomas and other cultural forms of certification are "...a piece of universally recognized and guaranteed *symbolic capital*, valid on all markets" (Bourdieu 1990, 136). Perhaps more accurately, certifications can be said to be a form of disembedding mechanisms – *symbolic tokens* – which by means of their abstract representation of a system enable extended structuring effects over *time-space distancing* (Giddens 1990 and Kantasalmi 2008, 80). When thinking of society, it is also possible to emphasize communication instead of the agency in ongoing social practices and structurings of social fields or system. We might choose to stress the communication and related binary coding specific to *a function system of education*. Then, in the case of school education, we would see in the selection of careers, a functional equivalent to scarcity of money in the economic system (Luhmann and Schorr 1979, 284–85 and 311–12).

Within the modernity debate this kind of abstractness of schooling can be historically seen as globalized from Europe (Giddens) to the world system with a core and peripheries (Wallerstein). These lines of viewing the globe could open comparative considerations of the expansion and extension of schooling and its effects on normalized preconceived units such as classrooms, local communities, provinces, nation-states and their regional groupings such as Latin America. The importance given to spatial aspects in the

social theorizing of Giddens and Bourdieu would, however, permit a more profound spatio-temporal analysis of the inside/outside regionalization of schooling as a field of practices. On the other hand, Luhmann's theoretical systems topology of society points to *world society* which would be understood as *functionally differentiated society*. This latter view, however, would preclude the possibility of analysing IBE through classical domination models. Instead, the Luhmannian technique would bring in the centrality of communication theory and dispose asking how different semantics are effective in terms of societal and social *structurations*. Luhmann's guiding distinction is between *semantics* and *structure*. This latter line of thinking might be used as complementing the agency related spatial emphasis in Giddens' and Bourdieu's social theorizing of structurations. However, the modernity-related point of abstractness of schooling remains. More and more social life in our world is transmitted via schooling in addition to mere education. In aiming to understand IBE, it is not enough to concentrate analysis on function system of education and its modern specificity with regard to traditional forms of socialization. It is necessary to ask for the specificity of schooling with regard to the variety of educational forms.

Schooling is not necessarily restricted to only geographically fixed schools. These practices with structural effects can be carried out also in spatio-temporal locations outside the school premises. The phenomenon and its practices cannot be reduced to a set of school organisations in politically conventional units, as the conventional view of educational system would have it. We, however, usually observe schooling indirectly by analysing the working of interactions within organisations and effects of organisations in conventional units such as neighbourhoods, villages, school districts and nation states. It requires thinking through societal theory to understand more clearly this horizontal boundary issue in schooling system. Conventional preconceived units of analysis even require some unthinking when aiming to grasp IBE. Localities of other forms of educational practices could be questioned as well. The most difficult part of unthinking normalized units of analysis is the case of nation-states, for they have been very effective bordered power containers (Giddens) with important educational constituents. Thus it is often difficult to treat analytically the necessarily contested educational semantics involved in IBE which is not structured clearly within nation-states' borders.

It is also necessary to point out that schooling is by no means to be related only to the practices at the organisational levels inferior to universities. It is clear though, that the vertical social orders transmitted by schooling are very

much structured by the top down logic following the formalities of the organisations of European origin. For instance, the disciplinary divisions and curricular constructions tend to be worked out in this manner. It is also clear that we can view the universities of European origin to be among the most effective organisations of global modernity. Practices of schooling are, however, also fostered within universities and other organisations of higher education. The specificity of these organisations with regard to inferior schools is in their connection to universal scientific knowledge and more localized research practices offering an increased variety of knowledge forms.

As far as global expansion and extension of schooling is a real and continuing historical trend – as we think it is – we also need to be aware of the countering tendency, which includes questions such as abstract logic within the modernity debate and instances of practices in world society. Views on increasing institutional reflexivity of modernity point to intrinsic questioning of the universal validity of knowledge claims (Giddens 1990). Reliance on the logic of schooling and related social strategies of professionalism, which have been based on university as an institution, are being increasingly questioned as well. This appears to relate also to reflexive instances such as IBE discourse, which suggests serious reconsidering of the western mode of operation through universalising knowledge claims. The increasing institutional reflexivity of modernity can be seen also in the increase of certifications produced in schooling. The condensed information of diplomas is transmitting more social life of the world than ever. The exclusion from diploma entitling processes is in this respect to be taken seriously, but as a matter of course, it is not the whole story of educational endeavour.

In other words, the analytical use of the education/schooling distinction presumes societal theory, whether implicit or explicit. The latter option would be obviously better, should we want to clearly distinguish different points of observation and related descriptions aiming at making use of this distinction. For the analysis of phenomena such as IBE it would be important to have the point of observations to be analysed as clearly as possible. In this publication we are offered observations which have been produced in instances where university research practices are involved in descriptive attempts to overcome differences in cultural forms of educational practices as manifest in indigenous self-descriptions of their knowledge forms. With the help of the education/schooling distinction informed by societal and social theory it might be possible to aim at observation of another order while recognizing that all of us are observing the IBE within the society. We could agree with Luhmann in

that there is no extra societal observing of this issue either. In these analytical terms the distinction we apply here presumes societal and social theory. Elaborations are necessary at least in two aspects; the notion of society and the nature of most elementary structural effects achieved by mechanisms of schooling specific certifications within it.

Our aims of unfolding the complexity involved in IBE in Latin America call for considering the university and its subordinate levels of schools as well as certain boundary practices to all these modern organization types of education and schooling. The boundaries are inside and outside of these organisations, and this can be thematically treated by systematically maintaining the distinction between schooling and education. It appears that within the IBE phenomenon it is often the education side of the distinction which is seen positive from the point of view of indigenous peoples while the schooling is viewed as negative. The contextual variation – say between nation-state units – in the continuum of colonisation show differences according to contemporary legislative state of affairs, but in principle the schooling side still often appears as something that has been imposed from the outside. In the history of schooling, various instances with resemblance to this are known. Applying the distinction and drawing the line is a matter of such description of practices which can recognize the historicity of the contested educational semantics. Paying attention to reflexivity of the processes and *historicization* of both the objects and categories of analysis is possible. Both dynamic systems theoretical outlook (Luhmann) and those analytical frames which emphasize agency and cultural reflexivity within social practices (Bourdieu and Giddens) can handle this. Both these analytical directions could support producing increasingly reflexive accounts of the semantics involved in struggles related to IBE. The illustrative model applied here is developed by following the latter emphasis, but we find it possible to ‘cross-discuss’ it with some of the Luhmannian systems theoretical thinking devices.

Looking back at the organizational change in Latin American schooling and education, it is possible to analyze the reflexivity of the process through semantics of various instances. In doing this it might be useful to distinguish first and second order observations at least at two levels of practices. Along the Luhmannian lines, the first order observations might refer to contextually determined points of view in daily *pedagogical practices*. These can be found in schools or in daily practices outside schools. On the other hand, first order observation are not bound to pedagogical practices only, but can be found in the *educational establishment* too. These instances are not directly related to

pedagogical interaction, but distanced from it. The establishment is nevertheless conditioning interactions and drawing upon them as sources of information in terms of monitoring, evaluating and planning. Thus its first order observations might relate, for example, to policy-making practices. Only as far as there is reflexivity in meaning of theorizing and modelling of pedagogical practices, could we speak of second order observations. Pedagogical theory is second order observation as far as it is theorizing observations made of the first order observing of pedagogical practices. In this view, we might take educational theory as second order theory which takes into account both the pedagogical practices and the practices of educational establishment. Clearly for Luhmann, third order observations were something of the kind of systematic theories. Should this be the aim, then at least we would need to complement the educational theory with a societal theorizing of schooling. Here we are merely aiming at offering some thoughts for observing the observations presented in chapters of this book.

Therefore when we speak of *pedagogical change* in Latin America we analyze the practices that can be arranged to serve certification mediated schooling in global markets and knowledge mediated educational practices that serve regionally or locally empowering processes. These two perspectives overlap in struggles over the Latin American education system ever since – if not even before – the impact of Paulo Freire's pedagogical thinking. Often this latter aspect is referred to by pointing to popular education movement and to the further developing of it by different carriers (social movements and organizations) in the reproduction and transformation of educational practices. Since the end of 1960s, the thinking and modelling of Latin American educational endeavour has been clearly influenced by ideas of schooling promoted by the supranational organizations, foreign donors of nations-states, but also by the ideas of education promoted by the cross-national organizing of the agency of the popular movements. The recent decades have added to this later tradition the fact that the indigenous movement have gained in influence. Thus IBE has become an instance for unfolding the complexity of the whole educational endeavour within the region. This, however, entails working out the connections to the societal abstraction of schooling too.

The organizational forms of schooling need to be viewed in various spatio-temporal extensions by taking into account the whole complex from the first scholarly grades to the doctoral degrees of universities. IBE as a phenomenon in Latin America is only conceivable within such meaningful wholes – field or system – although so far the pedagogical experiences have been manifested

mostly at certain inferior grades of scholarly organization and in the special semantics of *educational establishment*. In the horizontal boundary zones between schooling and education, the educational establishment of Latin America is highly complex and its grasping with regard to pedagogical change thus requires a spatio-temporal vocabulary (Bourdieu and Giddens) or/and use of highly sophisticated conceptual distinctions designed for the analysis of self-referential systems (Luhmann). We follow the former line while viewing it as offering the basis for the general theory of social practices. We are, however, aware of epistemic possibilities in conceptualizations and distinctions used also in the latter line of thinking.

At the level of supranational educational establishment, for instance, UNESCO's strategic millennium scheme of *education for all* by 2015, we can find as manifest the modern idea of universal elementary provision and its respective strategic inclusion semantics at regional and nation-state educational establishment levels. Such semantics poses, however, complicated analytical tasks with regard to reflexivity of *exclusion* and *inclusion*. These are always mutually manifest in concrete practices of opening or closing the schooling and its boundaries to education in the wider sense. Furthermore, we think that the self-descriptions of schooling are structurally bound to operate in what can be referred to as the dilemma of universal schooling while they necessarily need to take into account also the structural couplings of schooling in different social and societal settings (Kantasalmi 2001 and 2008). This means that the reflexivity of the social organization of schooling and the related self-description carries along the need for considering boundary zones or the ways the embedded operational closures of the educational system are produced. When looking back at the processes of educational change we aim at orientating the second order observers and the related descriptions, such as the one intended in chapters of this book. In terms of systems thinking, we would suggest focusing on the relationship of semantics and social and societal structures. Luhmann offers manifold understandings of this relationship, but also interesting epistemic possibilities (see Stichweh 2000).

At the moment we do, however, draw more upon the ideas related to Bourdieus's outlines for theory of practices and the ideas of reflexivity developed in the outlines of Giddens's theory of stucturation. Both theoretical orientations aim at overcoming the dualism of structure and action by taking social practices as the elementary starting point of analysis (Kantasalmi 2001 and 2008). Giddens's (1986) notion of *duality of structure* is the programmatic crystallization of developing the view on emergencies as structurations.

On these orientations we understand that *historicization* of the semantics has been practically dealing with the universal dilemma of schooling requiring reflexive reading of the products (texts, statistics etc.) of the descriptive practices of both the establishment (administration and management, planning and evaluation) and the agencies more directly related to pedagogical process (teachers, parents, students). In addition, we should not forget the reformatory semantics carried by social movements and their related intellectuals. By reflexive reading we mean the intent to avoid the fallacy of the scholarly point of view of which Bourdieu has extensively informed the social sciences. In systems theoretical terms this could mean the awareness of the problems in *re-entry*. That is especially clearly when the distinctions used in a system's process reflexivity become re-introduced to the ongoing system's operations. However, the main point in here is that no one approaching the problems in universalizing the provision of schooling, whatever the scholarly level concerned, can avoid thinking along the main axes of the model depicted below.

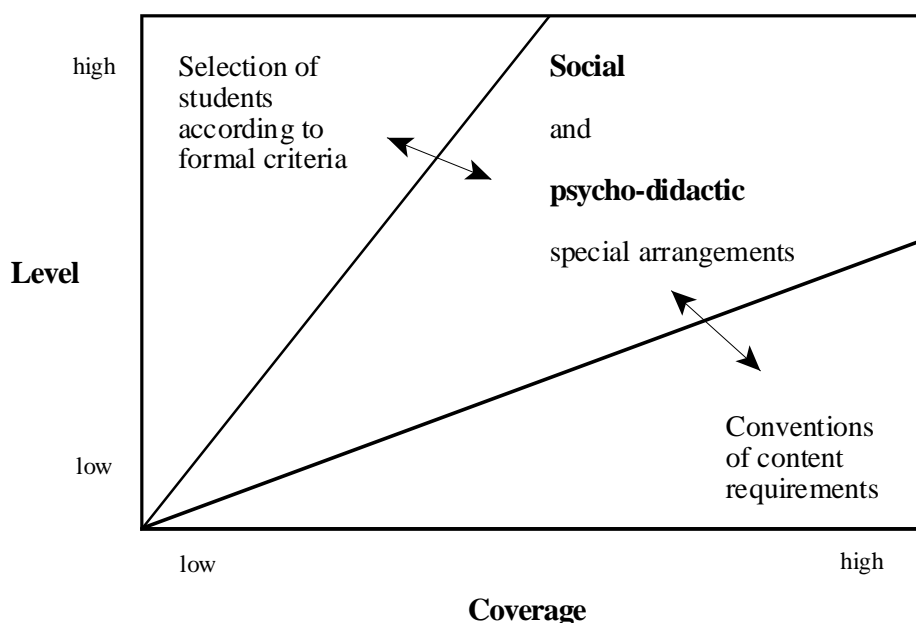


Figure 1 The Dilemma of Universal Schooling

In the frame of this illustrative model, the situated reflexivity can, and has been, searching for solutions that also open the inner and outer boundaries for the inclusion/exclusion problematic. In reformatory discourses typically

two residual lines of reflection appear. According to Kantasalmi (2001 and 2008), we call them the psycho-didactic special arrangements and the social special arrangements of schooling. The latter dimension of reflection widens the horizon of significations in schooling arrangements to the societal and organizational levels. We suggest *historicization* of semantics that operates on these dimensions. This means analysis of the relationship between semantics and the social/societal structures in historically determined contexts. This includes the need for *historicization* of the observed educational practices as well as the categories used in observing. The space of contingency thus opened could be understood also in terms of *functionalizing*. This entails viewing the structures as expectations and the thickening of communication as potentiating certain solutions while others turn out less likely. The macro scale projection of this problematic might be more illustrative.

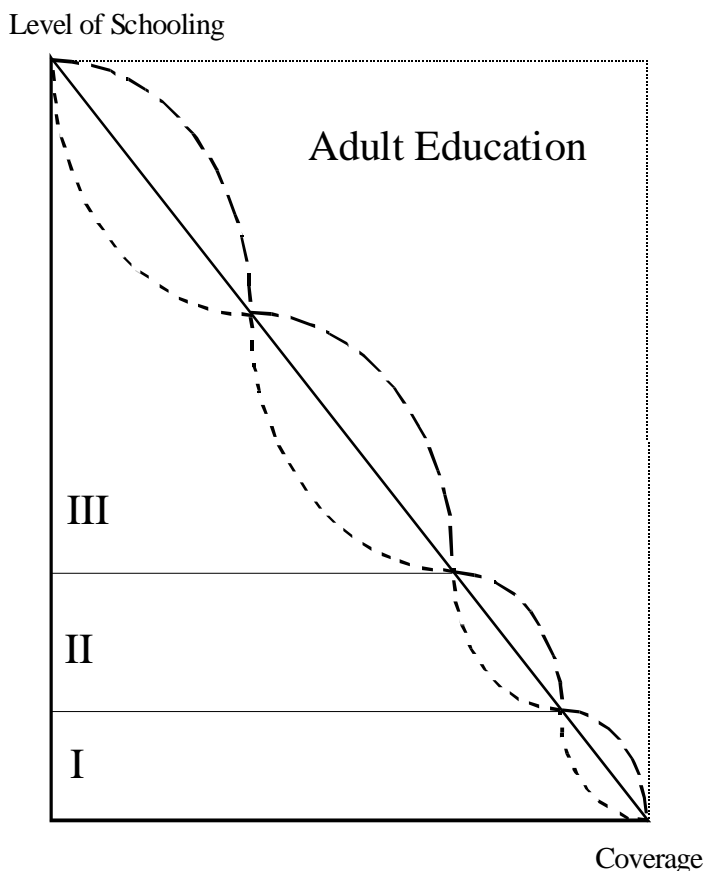


Figure 2 Theoretical Model of Schooling and Adult Education



The aim of the model above is to draw attention to the historically changing boundary problems of schooling/education. It was originally meant for locating European adult education semantics but here we suggest simply substituting that notion for those of popular education and IBE in Latin America. We are even tempted to claim that there is contextual continuity between the popular education and IBE discourses. We want to emphasize that when analyzing the phenomenon of IBE and the related qualitatively complex topology of the exclusion/inclusion problematic in Latin American schooling/education contexts, a special attention is needed with regard to the top down scholarly logics of European origins, and the role that the university has played in this. The public universities in Latin America have been nationally bound institutions but with important cross-national and regional roots in preceding post-colonial nation-states. In the process of nation-state making the projects of extension played an important role, but these were socially limited to what was then possible for understanding the social complexity of these newly born nations. Sousa Santos (2005) speaks of “*ecología de saberes*” when pointing to the actual problems caused by the past limited understandings of the relationship between the social and the cognitive injustice. The limitations of the social responsibilities of the university are partly in its logics - alien to the logics of practice, manifest in what can be called the indigenous knowledge. Accordingly the top down organization of the scholarly endeavour has reproduced the disciplinary matrix and encountered related problems both in its expansion and extension (Freire 1973). As Sousa Santos (2005) points out, the inclusion of the indigenous peoples to the scholarly system has also meant their exclusion.

The problems of education/schooling related to variation in knowledge forms have been and still are severe. Therefore we want to present a few analytical points with regard to the regional reformatory discourses of *educación popular* and IBE and their relation to practices at different levels of social analysis. Our focus is on indigenous peoples as a neglected public of the universities and the entire organization of schooling. The main topology of our consideration is the *indigenous knowledge* (UNESCO) or *local knowledge* (Geertz 1983) and the possibility of its incorporation into the disciplinary matrix of the western understanding of knowledge. The descriptions presented in this book concern educational knowledge but the issue is obviously wider than that. We think that both the former expansion and extension logics of schooling need to be analyzed and actually questioned while thinking the possibili-

ties of creating public scholarly space with more socially relevant epistemic effects in Latin America.

## **2.2 IBE in relation to the social- and psycho-didactic arrangements of schooling**

Thinking systematically through the schooling/education distinction can help us in considering the changes in the social organisation of educational endeavour. In particular, it will help us observe related themes across different analytical levels of IBE, as these are unfolded from the semantics of interculturality with different structural articulations. The model presented above helps us focus on the complex and reflexively defined boundaries at stake in the IBE phenomenon, which can be located in the grey zone or borderline between schooling and other cultural forms of education. In the following section we want to distinguish between two analytical levels with regard to the organisational aspect of schooling/education practices. We would briefly consider the IBE discourse in Latin America as part of the practices of the establishment and as part of the pedagogical practices. By the former we mean schooling/education related practices which are not directly pedagogical, but rather distanced of them. Pedagogical practices, however, are carried out typically in interactions which are normally characterised by co-presence. These are often, but not always, embedded in organisational contexts. Reflexivity as a process feature occurs at both levels of practices and its special semantics enables a multi-level analysis of practices as long as the structural side is theoretically sufficiently specified (Kantasalmi 2008).

For example, public functionaries or managers of school practices at different administrative and managerial levels are instances of the establishment. So are the planning and evaluation specialists with their quantitative and qualitative classificatory practices. In the case of IBE we should, however, acknowledge that also parties and movements with pedagogical reformatory aims and intellectuals responsible of related semantics can be considered from the point of view of establishment. Thinking through the schooling/education distinction also makes it clear that the instances of pedagogical practices are manifold and by no means confined to classrooms of conventional schools. These practices are, however, typically conceived by approaching pedagogical interactions, but crossings to organisation and societal levels of analysis remain necessary in order to grasp the complexity of IBE. The analysis of reflexivity and related semantics is the key to these crossings. The

analysis should be able to include issues of provision of schooling opportunities as well as wider educational practices mediated by the ecology of the knowledge forms ranging from traditional wisdom to the universalising claims of the scientific production of knowledge. From this point of view, it is fruitful to think that the focus on schooling normally implies the popularizing form according to expectation structures of the disciplinary divisions while the focus on education permits acknowledging a variety of ways of systematizing knowledge.

When observing IBE related processes from within the perspective of the educational establishment, we can find substantial differences in the interrelations among different organisations. This becomes clear in cases presented in this book. For instance, in the case of Ecuador, the indigenous people's participation in the schooling system is very strong. This is guaranteed through DINEIB (National Direction of Intercultural Bilingual Education). There is a direct responsibility of the indigenous movement in the definition of educational policies. DINEIB is part of the Ministry of Education and the Ecuadorian constitution recognises the rights of indigenous peoples to have their own system of Intercultural Bilingual Education. Often in history, there were tensions between the non-indigenous authorities in the Ministry of Education and DINEIB. We could even see that tensions were intensified when a Sub-Secretary for Intercultural Dialogue was created with a higher status within the administration of the Ministry of Education. In the Ministry the authorities were nominated by the Minister of Education without the direct participation of Indigenous Organisations. In the temporal dimension, however, we could observe that along the experiences in directional changes – forwards and backwards – the positioning of DINEIB within the organisation did make possible a greater visibility of the indigenous voices in defining educational policies. In the Ecuadorian context, the indigenous movement together with the leadership of DINEIB has been able to produce a particular relationship with the State. This has created a very special scenario for IBE pedagogical practices within the subcontinent, and MOSEIB (Ecuadorian Intercultural Bilingual Education Model) is a good example of it.

In Guatemala we can observe a quite different context of IBE. Different inter-relations have emerged between the semantics and structures since the indigenous movement plays a central role within the educational establishment, although it is still far from having a substantive influence in the definition of the state's educational policies. Should we set the focus on the establishment and on the management structures of the Ministry of Education, the

situation might look even better in Guatemala than in Ecuador. In Guatemala, IBE arrangements have gained a Vice Ministry of Bilingual and Intercultural Education. The CENEM (The National Council for Maya Education) may, however, and in fact does influence the educational policies in the Guatemalan context, even though it has no right to elect and promote the educational Vice Ministry of IBE.

However, in pedagogical practices – say at the classroom level – there is a general consensus on the lack of pedagogical methodologies and of a clear educational strategy in the decision-making process regarding intercultural bilingual education. From this point of observation, it is also clear that there are weaknesses with regard to curriculum proposals and teacher training pursuing intercultural education and intercultural bilingual education. These weaknesses are affecting schooling throughout all levels, from universities to basic education. It appears that the basis of these weaknesses is essentially in problems related to the lack of participation of the indigenous peoples in the formulation and development of concrete educational strategies.

The challenge remains in developing ways that facilitate bringing indigenous people's cultural values and forms of knowledge into schooling. The societal articulation of these sources into schooling arrangements has so far taken mainly a form of demands, while the actual challenge is not only in relevant political decisions of the society – in formulations of inclusive educational and societal aims – but rather in the construction of feasible pedagogical strategies and instruments which would enable the articulation of indigenous knowledge forms into the context of schooling. As a matter of course, teacher training and culturally pertinent learning materials are crucial and intrinsically connected to the possibilities of producing changes at the classroom level. However, also the research on curricula and/or curriculum development should aim at a clear understanding of both the actual and historical social arrangements – in terms of practices of educational establishment – as well as the necessary psycho-didactic arrangements – in terms of pedagogical practices. Understanding the curriculum either merely as a prescription or only as a practice would be missing an important part of the relevant reference problems. Rather we are suggesting looking at the curriculum as a combination of both, prescription and practice (Stenhouse 1984). This is basically because whatever conception on curriculum is followed – in the frame of IBE semantics potentiating the boundary making between practices of education and schooling – it is necessary to address clearly the political meanings attributed to the indigenous education within the Mayan socio-cultural context

as well as within the actual societal structures enabling the fostering of culturally pertinent educational process within particular systems of schooling.

In Ecuador, the political establishment has made possible the construction of a pedagogical model (MOSEIB) which may work as a basic norm in regulating IBE related practices.<sup>2</sup> Although a successful application of MOSEIB has a long way to go, in many ways it stands out in Latin America as a unique example of the achievement of the indigenous movement's struggles. This is even more so as the DINEIB has managed to advance in setting forth a local contextualisation of the general model in the Amazonian area, where the AMEIBA has been built up. This achievement is particularly relevant when looking at the ownership of the model in terms of participation of the indigenous people. There is still ample space for contingency between the normative model and the structurally conditioned possibilities of regulating the actual practices. The conditions for narrowing down this space between the curricular norm and IBE schooling practices are, however, better when the norms in this case are constructed by an active participation of the indigenous people.

In Bolivia, Lambertín & Lizarraga (2007) have addressed the historical changes of the aims of education particularly and, consequently, the positions of different actors in education and the society. Drastic changes in the political scenario in Bolivia from 2006 onwards have fostered a profound revision of the intercultural discourse and the semantics of the educational reform of the 1990's. The strongest critique of the educational reform in Bolivia and the way IBE was introduced points to the proposals' weaknesses to question the colonial establishment. The way the indigenous movement's participation took place at that time could be seen as weak, and in this sense also functional to the regime embedded in the colonial continuum and the aims of its educational establishment. The CEPOs (Educational Councils of Original Peoples) – a creation of the educational reform during 90's - assumed a different role in the new law brought forth by the education project *Avelino Siñani*. Substantive participation of indigenous people's is now expected at all levels.

The Bolivian aim of the decolonization of education puts the emphasis on *intra-inter culturality* as a means of recognizing the fundamental characters (*plurinacional, pluricultural* and *plurilingüal*) of the nation-state and thus creating particular conditions for schooling arrangements related to the Latin American IBE phenomenon. The idea of *intraculturality* is put forth in Bolivia with the emergence of an Indigenous Government. The semantics of *in-*

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<sup>2</sup> Oviedo & Wildemeersch (2008) presented some challenges and future prospects of MOSEIB as well as the historical context which made it possible.

*traculturality* stands for empowering and re-producing indigenous peoples' self-described cultural values and practices through schooling. The relevance of the concept is in the decolonizing of the education system. The new aims attributed to education are already demanding new psycho-didactic arrangements for schooling. The success of the emerging arrangements is seen to rely on the actual participation of indigenous peoples in the new proposal at all levels of schooling.

Beyond the nation-state contexts mentioned above, there are emerging spaces in Latin America where pedagogical public opinion is created around the IBE phenomenon. Recently the VIII Latin American Congress on IBE – a forum which has traditionally been supported and financed by multilateral organisations and international cooperation – was held in Buenos Aires. In the Congress declaration (point 5) there was a recognition and struggle to see IBE as a pedagogical model (see VIII Latin American Congress on IBE, Buenos Aires Declaration). However, this wishful thinking does not stand without serious contradictions, as we want to illustrate by pointing to some alternative ways of looking at the IBE model-making attempt in Latin America.

First, IBE might be seen as a regional pedagogical movement which claims changes in the social and political sphere through aims set for resolving educational exclusion. This means a critique of exclusion and communicating inclusive solutions with reference to the special characteristics (indigenous peoples) of the certain neglected public of schooling. In more action-oriented terms, we could view this movement as agency struggling against culturally and politically conditioned schooling exclusion by means of building on indigenous people's rights. Education viewed as potentiating emancipating effects plays a central role in this. Probably, the public policies and positions in the nation-state's organisations have been the most visible area of struggle for the indigenous movement, but it is not limited to it. A comparison with other pedagogical movements like *educación popular*, may help us find continuities and particularities of the IBE movement. We see at least three main issues to be considered when comparing *educación popular* and *intercultural bilingual education*; a) the compensatory provision of education governing the way schooling provision is shaped in both fields of practices, b) the processes of teacher training when considering the obstacles faced in both fields of practices regarding accreditation processes, c) the problems related to formulating curricula at all levels of schooling.

Second, IBE could be seen as an educational strategy to organise educational provision at the national or local levels. In this case, we should critically

assume that the strategy has limitations in meeting the variety of needs or demands (rural and monolingual communities, urban and suburban communities, etc). In the same way, we should question the political sense of such an educational strategy. In our view the authorship of the strategy has been only by definition linked to the participation of indigenous people, but in reality IBE strategy has been rather a response from the nation-states' schooling systems to the growing power of the indigenous peoples. It might also be a way of inclusion or integration to systems of the so called 'knowledge society'. We should, however, not assume that all indigenous peoples want to foster their social future under such clusters of political meanings. In other words, we call for awareness of the ideological effects operating in these often state generated strategies.

Third, IBE could also be seen as a field of practice. It might be viewed as a complex net of social organisations and everyday performances in action. It is about struggle over specific meanings, classifications, orientations and values in education and schooling, which are turned in particular pedagogical and establishment practices. Analysis of the relations that constitute such a field of practice requires identifying its actors, the position taken by the actors in the field and the levels of agency within extant social contradictions and societal conflicts. Yet defining the boundaries of such a field would remain challenging. For instance, we might try to understand the limits of the academic field by assessing its effects as viewed through forms of disciplinary programmes. Often the priority has been placed to language aspects instead of cultural objects or values. Paying more attention to the theorizing of *autopoiesis* in communication based social systems might offer an interesting additional basis for understanding the boundary making in the practices of IBE. Observing contexts of IBE through different types of social systems (interactions and organisations which enable articulations of different societal function systems) might help making sense of the semantics concentrated in this regional phenomenon. The use of notions such as Intercultural Bilingual Education (IBE), Bilingual Intercultural Education (BIE) or Intracultural, Intercultural and Plurilingual Education (IPE) may refer to the same field of practices and may coexist within it, but they could hardly be seen as exchangeable models or formulas between the different contexts. Within the present compilation, however, we can find reference to these "models" without any specific consideration on the substantive differences they involve and the differing horizons implied in them. This appears to be the case particularly in the use of notions of IBE and BIE. The case of IPE on its part sets a lot of signifying weight on

the notion of *intra-culturality* at the centre of the strategy. All these three key notions of educational strategies might pertain to the same regional field of practice, but the assumptions of functional equivalence, however, require a more empirically founded consideration of local experiences.

Too quick an acceptance of the claim that IBE already stands out as a pedagogical model which opens perspectives for local applications and adjustments might have limiting consequences for pedagogical practices. The fixed idea of a certain pedagogical model might close the horizons of possibilities in asking questions and searching solutions to real problems. In our view, we should look at IBE-BIE-IIPE semantics as manifests of emerging pedagogical problems that require diverse pedagogical solutions. In thinking through these solutions, it might be useful to keep it analytically clear that the boundaries between schooling and education are changing, and, in this, the special semantics of process reflexivity is of importance. Developing such sensitivity in observations is necessary for locating accurately the problems in educational inclusion of indigenous peoples. In our understanding, this process brings into consideration several themes such as the issue of accreditation/formalisation of indigenous knowledge forms in bridging the schooling-education divide. It also means awareness of the reflexivity involved in monitoring, planning, evaluating and researching indigenous education/schooling boundaries. The aforementioned themes open multidisciplinary challenges for traditionally trained academic minds. Thus we are closing by presenting a few comments on observing everyday practices while hoping to illustrate the challenges in the diversity of contexts of approaching indigenous knowledge.

### 3 Observing everyday practices

The research works presented in the following chapters all focused on the study of everyday practices of different indigenous people. Basically, cultural values and practices are approached through different strategies. However, there is a common aim behind the research efforts: to provide input for IBE teacher training and the production of learning and teaching materials. Crucially, there is a clear academic and political meaning to reverse the invisibility and oppression of entire systems of knowledge and values of different indigenous peoples.

During the last few decades, different ways of analysing and denominating the “problem area” of everyday practices have been developed. Studies are



emphasizing everyday cognition in various ways (Cole & Scribner, 1974; Rogoff & Lave 1984), cognition in practice (Lave, 1988), problem solving and constitution of knowledge at work (Llorente, 2000); communities of practice (Wegner, 1998); street mathematics or mathematics in practice (Saxe, 1991; Nunes et al., 1994); etc. These studies address social and psychological ways of functioning in contexts which differ from practices in the settings of schooling. Within these discourses we find disciplinary needs (psychology, anthropology, etc) or multidisciplinary units of analysis as the study of "context", "activity", and "actions", inscribed within relevant social or societal practices. Often different disciplinary efforts in studying everyday practices were related to schooling. That is, the result of the viewpoint of studies which were aiming at bringing in and/or to bridging out-of-school practices with school practices.

Studies – as those mentioned above – concerning the relationship between culture and cognition have already shown the impossibility of explaining the knowing processes apart from contextual influences. However, to different degrees, attention is given to knowledge-transfer from context to context (Nunes 1992) and on the status given to the knowledge in different settings (Biggs 1992 31–38). Behind these studies and results underlie psychological traditions (i.e. Piagetian and Vygotskian traditions) which stress either the universal cognitive or socio-cultural situatedness of cognitive actions. Underlying all these perspectives is the relation between learning and context constituting the crucial units of analysis for addressing the practices of everyday life.

The studies reported in this book, either explicitly formulated or not, follow the idea of understanding human practices as socially and historically situated, though a varying degree of emphases is placed on productive, organisational or spiritual practices. In principle, these aspects do not necessarily differ from other approaches addressing everyday life as referred to above. However, a substantive difference must look at the explicit or implicit meanings underlying these studies. In the study of everyday practices, the research meanings were traditionally merged in certain disciplines or multidisciplinary approaches. In the emerging perspective of researching indigenous culture and values from the indigenous perspectives, the research meanings go above and beyond disciplines. This is because the effort is made to produce understandings of social practices from indigenous world views which do not recognise western originating disciplinary divisions and therefore inter- or multidisciplinary approaches. This kind of perspective calls for attention not only on the level of observation of the practices but on the cultural belongings of

the observer positions. This implies that the cultural matrix of the researcher which is utilised to capture meanings, structures and values of practices produced under non-western and singular worldviews are likely to be questioned by the indigenous peoples. Such ways of understanding the point of view of the observer may radically conclude with the impossibility of conducting research on indigenous knowledge when not pertaining to the culture under study.

Reasoning along the lines mentioned above, we could observe that the organizational conditions for producing research constitute another relevant theme. All the studies presented in this book have been conducted from the universities which may be considered as belonging to the continuum of the colonial schooling system. This theme is becoming increasingly complex when struggles for creating indigenous universities are intensified along with the consideration of the need for creating whole new systems of schooling for indigenous people. Efforts in this sense come not only from civil society (indigenous movement) but also from the states, as in the case of UNIA (National Intercultural University of the Amazonia) in Peru. The study of everyday practices may have totally new meanings according to the characteristics of the institution where the work is carried out. In addition, studies on everyday practices have been traditionally carried out from non-indigenous universities and within these organisations under specific academic units according to the dominant disciplinary approach adopted (psychology, social psychology, anthropology, linguistics, etc.). In the studies carried out under the frame of the PROEIMCA and EIBAMAZ programmes, we can see that the research has been organised under special academic units which relate to the organisation of the university in different ways. The Institute of Applied Linguistics (CILA) and The Institute of Linguistics and Education (ILE) show long traditions in structural links with their respective universities. In addition, both cases clearly show a particular disciplinary orientation. In the cases of *PROEIB Universidad Mayor de San Simón* and Direction of Intercultural Bilingual Education in the *Universidad de Cuenca*, the units under which the studies were carried out have a rather loose structural relation with their respective universities while they tend to have a wider disciplinary approach to the field of intercultural bilingual education. Similarly, the studies of everyday practices of indigenous peoples can also be a source of questioning the organisational context of production and validation of the research results.

The observations made above do not aim at drawing conclusions or judgements on the quality of the research processes carried out. On the con-

trary, we are merely pointing to different attempts of coping with the underlying problem. These observations are made in order to open discussion for gaining a better understanding by means of reconsidering the strategies that were utilised in each case. In order to illustrate our aims we shall conclude with a brief analysis of the different resolutions adopted regarding the participation of indigenous peoples in the research process.

### 3.1 Observing the indigenous presence in research processes

With the research design we are referring broadly to the institutional and organisational setting, explicit academic and political frames of meanings as well as to the elaboration of the research plan with definition of the objectives and methods. Although universities as organisations do set constraints on the research work, these may be loosened or tightened by the ways the research work is designed and consequently carried out by social actors who do not belong to the universities.

The research done in Guatemala, offers an interesting example with regard to the participation of indigenous people's organisations in the design and the follow-up of the entire process. The participation of CENEM at the outset of the research process illustrates a way of loosening the restrictions that the university in charge of the work may have presented. This is the only case where a special *follow-up committee* with the direct participation of indigenous people was created in pursuit of granting certain epistemological control on the research process by an indigenous organisation. Epistemological control would normally be understood as a matter of theoretical constructions guiding the observations and the ways in which the conclusions are drawn within disciplinary or multidisciplinary orientations. In the study made in Guatemala, the epistemological control, however, rather refers to guaranteeing that the proper worldview of the indigenous stakeholders remains at the basis of constructive devices of observation and guiding interpretations of their social practices. It was an attempt to avoid the distortion of categories with relevance to their worldview. In addition to this, and at a different level of observing, the study conducted in Guatemala introduced the character of *cultural mediator* for purporting the conceptual bridging of Mayan and western worldviews.

Another way for bringing up into analysis indigenous worldviews in the research process has been the joint work of researchers with academic background – usually not indigenous – and researchers of indigenous origin –

usually without academic background. The *intercultural team* participated throughout the process (research design, field work, analysis and reporting). This was the case in the study conducted in the Bolivian Amazonia. Looking at the validation and the possible epistemological control processes, the Bolivian case differs from that of Guatemala. In Bolivia, the indigenous communities who selected and promoted the indigenous researcher somehow assumed the epistemological follow-up of the study. Indigenous organisations – that is the CEPOs of the plains – although part of the intercultural educational establishment, did not play a prominent role in this particular case. The process carried out in Peru rather illustrates the *participatory research approach*, where emphasis was placed on the emergence of the indigenous people's voices at different moments of the process. No systematic mechanism of epistemological control by the indigenous organisations or other forms of indigenous point of view is reported in this case.

In Ecuador, the work was carried out by the *Universidad de Cuenca*. The strategy in the research on everyday practices was radically different to those mentioned above. On the one hand the problem of the epistemological control over the whole research process was given to the researchers themselves. Instead of creating methodological arrangements to grant the visibility of indigenous voices, a *formative process of indigenous researchers* was designed in order to fully rely on the researcher for the task of finding the appropriate categories to describe everyday practices. In this case, a direct observation by the *students-researchers* aimed at guaranteeing the authentic nature of the self-descriptions of practices. In a way, the research was based in methodological terms on this formative process of indigenous researchers. The content introduced into this formative process appear as surprising. Western epistemologies and ways of understanding research were introduced to be interpreted from the viewpoint of Amazonian worldviews while aiming at describing their own culture and values. Beyond assessing the relevance of a research work carried out by researchers who were part of the practices studied, and as such shared the cultural matrices of understanding the observed social reality, we should also consider the political meaning of such a work.

## 4 Closing remarks

The different strategies utilized and also the different meanings underlying the studies of everyday practices, particularly indigenous cultures and values, should be analysed by regarding the complex relations between schooling and education. Disciplinary and even multidisciplinary approaches on issues to do with educational relevance often appear as intimately connected to the domain of schooling, not only because of the logic of reasoning and epistemologies of observing, but also due to the fact that the products of the studies are to be primarily utilised at different levels of the school organisation. Contrary to this, the studies of indigenous peoples' cultural forms are not necessarily aiming at nourishing schooling, within the limits of IBE as an educational political strategy. To us it remains clear that fostering indigenous education calls for a rethinking and broadening of the boundaries between schooling and education.

Studies on everyday practices, which are not necessarily aiming at impacts on schooling but rather at transformations in social practices, might help to rethink research strategies regarding the study of the forms of indigenous knowledge. In the interest shown in activity systems and their historical evolution (Engeström, Miettinen & Punamäki 1999) and on the relationship between learning and context (Chaiklin & Lave 1996), we can find a number of studies on out-of-school practices which could be considered as inspiring the further observing and systematising of those studies on the forms of indigenous knowledge which have been carried out from the point of view of indigenous worldviews.

However, within the contemporary world society, complex phenomena, such as IBE in Latin America, can hardly be narrowed down to local settings of pedagogical interaction only. Instead, we should aim at posing the questions clearly by acknowledging the abstract global system of schooling as a process of boundary making with regional, nation-state and local educational forms. From the perspective of the Luhmannian systems theory, we could try to narrow down this complexity by assuming communication as the most elementary unit in different types of social systems. In the function system of education we can detect an amazing array of knowledge forms that can successfully mediate connectivity of communication into pedagogical closures of different contextual sizes. In addition, by focusing on certified processes of schooling, we might rather well handle the complexity of the school organisation driven differentiation of the societal education system. A special advan-

tage of this approach is its capability of specifying the inside/outside boundaries while allowing the transportation of data between contexts of different sizes. With the help of the Luhmannian form analysis we could also grasp the problems of re-entry of classifications and concepts of educational knowledge presented in the chapters of this book.

Furthermore, we believe that also by setting the focus on practices by assuming the centrality of the agency and the dominating cultural forms as point of departure of field analysis, as in the thinking of Bourdieu, it is possible to obtain adequate understanding of the complexity of the IBE phenomenon. This, however, would entail what we call reflexive reading of different research descriptions. The main point in such a strategy is in *historicization* of not only the descriptions but also the construction of categories of observation used in producing these descriptions. In many ways this is a matter of grasping the contextual, and not only situational, struggles over the classifying practice. When it comes to approaching the different strategies of observing indigenous knowing and forms of knowledge this is not a simple endeavour. This article is not the place to elaborate on these difficult issues, but we do hope that we have been able to illustrate some interesting dimensions for further analysis of the richness of the descriptions presented in this book.

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Chapter 2

**ECUADORIAN AMAZONIAN  
CULTURES: THEORETICAL  
APPROACHES TO THE TRAINING  
OF RESEARCHERS**

Humberto Chacón  
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## Summary

The approach to the investigation realized in intercultural contexts within the framework of the degree program “research on Amazonian cultures of Ecuador”, carried out by the University of Cuenca in cooperation with the EIBAMAZ (Intercultural bilingual education for the Amazon region) program, considers the following:

The process of formulating the curriculum design is revised, together with its ontic, epistemological, theoretical, methodological, logical and axiological basis, from a perspective of the convergence between Western knowledge and that developed by the Amazonian peoples of Ecuador. The significant contributions of the research carried out by the students regarding their worldview are visualized, and within these the emphasis is on their myths, rites, and customs. The purpose is that each student identifies and adequately puts in writing the units of analysis for each of his or her object of research.

This approach tries to reflect on the need to establish rigorous and respectful dialogues between different forms of thinking and knowledge stemming from Amazonian and Western experiences in a way that makes it possible to come up with a synthesis of the way of thinking, which in turn can be approached and acted upon. Thus, the aim is to present a type of *constructivitalist*<sup>1</sup> research proposal.

## Acknowledgments

The reflection, analysis, and information that we offer in this article is the result of the training process of indigenous researchers and, in particular, of the information presented in the field research reports written by them. The reports collect, systematize and preserve the oral wisdom of the elderly, since former writings have been hostile towards oral cultures, unjustly categorized as “wild, barbarous or uneducated”. This article considers that the elderly are the possessors and transmitters of traditional knowledge. The death of one of them can be compared to a library being burned down.

We are grateful for the systematic and dedicated work of the following young people of different Amazonian nationalities of Ecuador, who are studying the degree program in research of Amazonian cultures in the University of Cuenca, in the applied research line of EIBAMAZ, the regional program of bilingual and intercultural education for the Andean Amazonian region.

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<sup>1</sup> The term “constructivitalist” denotes the possibility of recovering, systematizing, constructing and revitalizing the traditional oral wisdom and defining categories that permit a synthesis of the thinking of the nationalities of the Amazonian region of Ecuador.

## Chapter 2

Andi Alvarado Pedro Juan	Kichwa of Napo
Calapucha Andy Claudio Fidel	Kichwa of Pastaza
Calapucha Cerda Lineth Rosenda	Kichwa of Pastaza
Lopez Shiguango Eliseo Hider	Kichwa of Pastaza
Lopez Shiguango Horlando Ramón	Kichwa of Pastaza
Shiguango Calapucha Karina	Kichwa of Napo
Tanguila Andy Angélica Silvana	kichwa of Napo
Tanguila Andy Darwin Francisco	Kichwa of Pastaza
Yasacama Aranda Carmen Amelia	Kichwa of Pastaza
Uguña Fernández Héctor Arturo	Kichwa of Azuay
Vacacela Medina Sara Matilde	Kichwa of Zamora
Chiriap Tsenkush Nampir Livia	Shuar of Morona Santiago
Jimbiquiti Puenchera Luzmila	Shuar of Morona Santiago
Kayap Atsut Octavio	Shuar of Morona Santiago
Kuja Jimpikit Marino Elías	Shuar of Morona Santiago
Mayak Chiriap Intiash Emilia	Shuar of Morona Santiago
Mashinkiash Anank Mariela	Shuar of Morona Santiago
Mashinkiash Chinkias Juan Manuel	Shuar of Morona Santiago
Mashu Nankitai Pedro Alfredo	Shuar of Morona Santiago
Sharup Tseremp Guillermina	Shuar of Morona Santiago
Shiki Yankur Raúl Ernan	Shuar of Morona Santiago
Timias Sando Edi Mauricio	Shuar of Zamora Chinchipe
Tsunki Yampis Nube	Shuar of Morona Santiago
Yampik Kajekai Ruth Esthela	Shuar of Morona Santiago
Chuji Tukup Nase Luis	Achuar of e Morona Santiago
Shimpiu Kintiui Tsere Carlos	Achuar of Morona Santiago
Wasump Urunkus Kasep Franklin	Achuar of Morona Santiago
Yankuam Kiakua Wisum	Achuar of Morona Santiago
Tocari Ahua Quimontari Daniel	Waadani of Pastaza
Yeti Caiga Cawetipe	Waadani of Pastaza
Mendua Chapal Albeiro Amable	Cofán of Sucumbíos

# 1 Reflections on the formulation of the curricular proposal

From 2006, the Department of Intercultural Studies of the University of Cuenca in Ecuador, within its academic proposals, has developed the degree program in “Research on the Amazonian Cultures”, directed predominantly to university graduates with a bachelor’s degree who belong to the communities of the six indigenous peoples living in the Ecuadorian Amazon region: Shuar, Amazonian Kichwa, Achuar, Cofán, Sápara, and Waodani.

The central theme of the program is the principle of ‘interculturality’, that is understood as the finding of common ground with the other in order to achieve “good living” within the framework of mutual respect and the establishment of minimum consensus that bring about sustainable human development. It should be noted here that each of the Amazonian indigenous peoples live in specific contexts today, in the era of globalization, and that in the search of common ground with the others, it is from this context that the best possible strategies are to be designed. This is done by visualizing and deconstructing the indigenous context’s key spiritual imaginary world as real existing knowledge, establishing a new platform for statements at the moment of engaging in dialogue with other knowledge, developed first and foremost by Western culture.

Confronted with this situation, it was necessary to define the scope of the research as a process focusing on the human condition – i.e. on the social action supported by the indigenous worldview, which is the spiritual transcendental referent that interprets and guides quotidian practice in the life of the peoples of the Ecuadorian Amazon region. In this sense, the research is understood as a complex relational whole that prioritizes the understanding underpinning practical actions. This lends the research a two-dimensionality: to be interesting and interested at the same time, which requires political guidance.

This situation forms a research setting in which all the involved agents assume shared and temporal leadership roles that are defined from the pedagogic principle of significant learning guided by policies. Indeed, research within a comprehensive, flexible, and dialogic process which, following the behavior of the concentric circles of the Amazonian worldview, is transformed through understanding and transforms understanding.

Under these considerations, and accepting the risk that in some moment of the process, the curricular proposal for the training of Amazonian researchers transforms into something immeasurable, we favor the dialogue between

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some epistemological referents traditionally in conflict. The following count as the most prominent of these referents:

- The causality, objectivity and rigor in verifying the validity of knowledge (scientific positivism);
- The historic and cultural constructivism and complexity theory from the critical Western point of view;
- The relational nature of logic of the concentric circles formed by Amazonian worldview;
- The recovery of the contextual sense of the spoken word, executed action, or felt relation.

Starting from these considerations, the central lines that give rise to sense and meaning were defined for the research. This made it possible to concretize the curriculum design. The abovementioned central lines are:

### *Knowledge as process*

- That which helps one to know
- The problems of knowing
- The processes of knowing
- The attitude within and confronting knowledge
- The validity and reliability of knowing and of what is known

### *Knowledge as organized information*

- The relational sphere of life as a social whole
- The relational sphere of the real world and of the daily lives of the Amazonian inhabitants and communities (rites, myths, customs etc.)
- The relational sphere of the Amazonians as social agents in contact with their natural environment and with the spiritual world

### *The human sense and intention of knowledge as a process, as organized information, or as life sciences*

- The relational bonds between persons: the criteria and spheres of communication between social, cultural, speaking and hearing subjects that make decisions and leave them unmade

- The relationship with nature: the natural world as fundamental spiritual home to man, the space for production, reproduction, life, vitalization, and the ending of life.

The above presented should be understood and accepted as complex and complete relational processes in the form of one type of realist *constructivism*.

## 2 Methods used in the training processes of the research

### 2.1 The fundamentals of the Western philosophy and of the Amazonian worldview

During the last decades, sociology and cultural sciences have revolved around the recognition of the other through processes of social interrelation, paying more attention to the experience of relational processes with the others and to the search for possible convergence within the framework diversity, which includes ethnicity, race, class, gender, generation, cognitive capacity etc., all of which are becoming evident and are configured in everyday life<sup>2</sup>.

This change of direction in the social sciences and humanities tries to build the necessary bridges for the understanding of the diverse Amazonian traditional knowledge and wisdom that has not entered the process of positive formalization and standardization. Despite this, in the same way that philosophy is a fixed referent to Western society, to the Amazonian peoples their traditional knowledge and wisdom represents vital and spiritual referents that maintain quotidian experiences in a harmonious dance. This connects them with reality through all that is sensed, felt and thought. To be precise, traditional knowledge and wisdom forms the good living, and makes it a key relational experience.

Thus, the possible convergence between Western philosophy and Amazonian wisdom is being impelled from an increasingly relational reality, which faces the following challenges: first, to identify its strengths and weaknesses in connection with the importance that is given to feeling and thinking as a relational whole; second, the form in which each of the socio-cultural experiences configure the human-human, human-nature, nature-human relationship

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<sup>2</sup> This reality is present in the curriculum design of the education program of Research on the Amazonian Cultures of Ecuador.

(good living); and third, how to construct the possible indispensable understanding between Western and Amazonian worldview, in the framework of a consented relational experience, in order to bring about concomitantly intra-cultural and intercultural good living?

### **2.2 The research subject: an ontological, ontic, or fundamental vision**

Classical Western philosophy identified ontology with the being as such, as a vital existence. But its existence depends on a series of factors that transcend its initial vitality in order to guarantee its historical, contextual experiences. In this process, the understanding with the others is diversified and made more complex by the effect of multiple elements and criteria (an individual that feels, thinks and transcends). These form the harmonious dance of the relational sphere, in which the intersubjective scope of the interaction with the environment, other people, and the symbolic and communicational constructions, adopt the most varied forms. They also become the necessary referents of the ontic subject in the field of intercultural research.

The ontic being linked to the diverse spiritual worlds that reside in the Amazonian worldviews is determined by the permanent search for being/existing, even though that basis of being wouldn't be recognized by Western logical reasoning. Its real condition of existence is found in another level, possibly cosmic or extra-cosmic, in an extra-sensorial, not systemized dimension, which perhaps is not even possible to systemize by means of rational logic. However, this cannot deny its condition of existence. In this circumstance, the identification of the units of analysis of research ought to be constructed in the framework of this relational existence (between the physical and extra-physical) that is manifested in all the actions of the Amazonian inhabitants' quotidian life.

The complexity of the Amazonian subjects from the ontic perspective is further complicated when they are contextualized in the global world of today.

## **3 Some preliminary results**

The following ideas have been extracted from the reports of field research carried out by students with regard to the Amazonian worldview in different ethnic communities.

### 3.1 The imaginary forced by the Amazonian worldview into the construction of the units of analysis of the research processes

Each of the Amazonian indigenous peoples have their spiritual referent that transcends as a cross-cutting whole in the individual and collective thinking, feeling and acting of the peoples or inhabitants within each of their communities, whether in productive or reproductive activities. The worldview is the imaginary that vitalizes and characterizes the members of each of the indigenous peoples, the Shuar, Amazonian Kichwa, Achuar, Cofán, Sápara, and Wao-dani.

From an intercultural perspective, it is neither possible nor convenient to undertake research on the Amazonian culture, society, and environment in a setting alien to the one that they have been historically constructed upon and which is pervaded by indigenous worldviews.

Taking these reflections into consideration, the Amazonian researchers, during the first semester of education, familiarized themselves with and contextualized the appropriate methodological processes, with the aim of systemizing the important aspects of the worldviews of each indigenous people. This was done in order to understand, from the perspective of their subjective experiences, the cosmic and extra-cosmic relationships of their existence as individuals, as society and as space-territoriality.

#### *Samay: the vital force of the worldview of Amazonian Kichwa<sup>3</sup>*

The worldview of the Amazonian Kichwa people presents different dimensions of life that are interrelated via a vital force called *Samay*.

The dimension known as Awa Pacha is the dwelling place of the heavenly bodies: the sun, the moon and the stars. In distant times, these lived in Kay Pacha and possessed the same characteristics as human beings. After fulfilling their mission, they moved to Awa Pacha, to remain in a superior time and space. Time passes slowly in Awa Pacha, which is why the heavenly bodies can live thousands and millions of years.

The dimension of Puyu Pacha represents the intermediary space between Awa Pacha and Kay Pacha. It is the dwelling place of the lighting, the stars, and the human beings that lived in Kay Pacha in the past. Beings that inhabit the Kay Pacha, principally birds such as the condor and the hummingbird, can

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<sup>3</sup> The ideas have been extracted from the research reports carried out in the communities of the Amazonian Kichwa people by the students Lineth and Calapucha.



access this dimension. In the Puyu Pacha dimension there exists communities and authorities like here in our world.

The dimension of Kay Pacha is the residence of all material structures, visible to man, among which it is possible to identify the plants, animals, rocks, mountains and water. It is also the temporal dwelling of the Supay, but their principal world is the Uku Pacha.

All material structures found in this dimension have different forms of life; the mountains, lagoons, rocks, and stones, are all worlds containing life. Water seen from Uku Pacha is the cloud that separates this dimension from Kay Pacha.

Uku Pacha or Kuri Pacha is the dwelling place of the “spirit men”, such as the Supay, and in that dimension there exist cities with sophisticated structures with streets and avenues, and also rulers and military, civilian, and ecclesiastic authorities. There the animals are mascots of the Supay. The material representation of the Supay is the anaconda or *Tsumy*. Time elapses slower than in Kay Pacha, which is why one day equals three days there.

Nina Pacha is the world that lies below Uku Pacha, and it is the abode of fire. Almost no one has access to it, perhaps only after death. It seems that in the distant past the light came from Nina Pacha, because at that time the sun still lived in Kay Pacha, in the form of a person.

These dimensions of the world are related to and sustained by the *Samay*, a vital force originating from Awa Pacha. It is to be emphasized that living beings, especially the Shuar, cannot live without the *Samay*, which could be illustrated as a thread hanging from Awa Pacha and connected with the crown of the head of each Shuar person. The *Samay* is the thread of life, and if someone possessing certain powers were to try to cut that thread, it would signify death.

### 3.2 The god Piatsaw and the worldview of the saparos<sup>4</sup>

The god Piatsaw was visiting people from community to community, always trying to confirm which the best way of life was. During his visits, he frequently found persons who did not believe in his word, and he punished them. When the mortals found out of his presence and the possibility of being punished, they called the *Chikuan* or “lying bird” which responded by making the sound “chik, chik, chik”, after which they prepared to protect themselves from the punishments of the great god Piatsaw.

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<sup>4</sup> The ideas have been extracted from the reports of field research carried out in the Saparo communities by the student Yeti Cawetipe.

*The last work of Piatsaw*

One day Piatsaw took three animals, the crab, the snake, and the snail to see if they can change their skin and make themselves younger. The crab and the snake fulfilled Piatsaw's request without problems, while the snail removed its skin halfway of its body and screamed "forever, forever, forever". Piatsaw became angry and hit the snail in the mouth with a stick, and this is why the snail eats and defecates with its mouth.

Had the three animals complied with the task of shedding their skin, now the Saporos would have an eternal life. This did not become possible, since the snail did not fulfill the shared request. Under these circumstances, a Saparo person is to live during his or her whole existence trying to change skin, because if the person does not accomplish the said mandate, death will follow almost immediately.

When Piatsaw visited each of the Saparo communities, the world was formed as a relational whole, integrated by three parts: the heaven, the earth and the underground.

In the past the Saparo lived in the pristine and uncontaminated jungle, and during that time Piatsaw lived with them. He was a person who possessed the power of wisdom and was also like a *Shimanu* (shaman).

During the time he lived with the Saparo, he was able to confirm the way in which they lived, the type of intimate relationship they had with each other and Piatsaw, and the trust and respect they had for him. Thus he was able to see that among the Saparo people there existed various types of life that at times did not correspond to what the divinity expected. For this reason he left them certain punishments as shared inheritance, such as nightfall, floods and earthquakes.

### 3.3 The heavenly world of Chiga in the worldview of the Cofane<sup>5</sup>

Chiga (god creator) lived in the first times and created all that we have now, the A'i (Cofane people), the animals, and the earth. He was the first creator of the whole world. That is why the A'i know him as the "first creator that lived here in this world".

Thus living in this world, he created the earth. It was the first world that god Chiga created, but he quickly destroyed it. Then he created another world,

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<sup>5</sup> The ideas have been extracted from the reports of field research carried out in Cofan communities by the student Albeiro Amable Mendua Chapal.

and that one he also exterminated with a flame. After this he created a third world, which he also ended using water and floods. Many people perished in the floods, and only three persons survived in different places. They were ignorant of each other's existence, thinking that they were the sole survivors, and they said to themselves: "I am the only one that has saved my life." Unaware of each other, they wandered around until god Chiga arranged for their meeting.

One day one of them said to the others "I'm going hunting in the hills" and went his way. Thus the others were left alone, and they sat down. The other one said to his companion "how I wish you were a woman", touching his companion's chest. Being touched in this manner, the companion became a woman. When the third person came back from hunting, he became afraid and accused the other for what had happened and went away to live alone in the jungle.

As god Chiga lived alone in this world, he began to create the A'indekhûve, the Cofan people. Chiga dropped a fistful of earth, and from there emerged persons. And he created in the same manner the world for the Cofan to live in. Seeing that the world was small, he put an earthworm in it, and this worm ate the earth and defecated more earth. This is how the world originated, the earth transforming every day, becoming larger, and this is how Chiga later changed the persons. Some of them tried to match Chiga, who, confronted with such insolence, converted them into *kukuyas*, who became snakes when they tried to convert back to humans.

### 3.4 Tsunki, lord of the water in the worldview of the Shuar<sup>6</sup>

Tsunki is the lord of the water, since he lives within it together with the fish, lizards, caimans, big turtles, fearsome boas, and other animals of salt and sweet water. Tsunki is the divine lord of all these, and this is why when the Shuar go fishing, the god of the water protects their animals. When the rivers become muddy and the clouds menace with torrential rain, the fishers say "Tsunki skimps on the fish".

When a Shuar wants to acquire the force of Tsunki, he or she makes a hut close to a river and takes the *guanto*, (a plant used for shamanic intoxication) and through the sleep Tsunki hands over the force to the Shuar that sacrifices him or herself. In the distant past, Tsunki gave the power of healing to the

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<sup>6</sup> The ideas have been extracted from the reports of field research carried out in the Shuar communities by the student Octavio Kayap.

*uwishin*-shamans, and those who possessed his power were able to heal without difficulties but never asked for anything in return.

### **3.5 Shakaim, the lord of the jungle**

His power is in the capacity he had for teaching how to till the land and make it bear fruit. When the Shuar people wish to perform agricultural work, they always entrust Shakain with pleas and prayers. They perform these to guarantee the successfulness of their work, but they must fulfill the instructions of Shakaim.

When Shakaim was young he began to work, and with an invincible power he fell the thickest and largest trees in such a delicate way that when they fell they made a marvelous sound for all to hear. "I'm also like the woodcutter insect which cuts trees with ease, which is why the trees become so soft." Singing like this, he worked without difficulties. However, when the Shuar do not offer their pleas to Shakain, they are unsuccessful and run the risk of dying, trapped between the falling trees.

## **4 The constructed theory and the traditional Amazonian knowledge-wisdom**

In this context and with the aim of trying to bring about the possible and necessary relational common ground between socially constructed cultures interested in an intercultural academic understanding, the following elements have been integrated in the curricular matrix as cross-cutting categories, which are also undergoing a constant de-construction process: a) space-time – calendars; b) land, territory, territoriality; c) natural cycles; d) mythology; e) life sciences; f) relational wisdom; among others. Without these categories it would become impossible to carry out intercultural research from the point of view of the Amazonian experience.

### **4.1 Space-time**

The aim is to establish the possible understanding between the Gregorian concept of time (months and days) and the indigenous temporal organization, based on lunar, solar and ecologic notions that frequently correspond with

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cyclic moments of cultural creation, destruction and reconstruction, or re-birth.

For the Amazonian peoples the space that frequently refers to the land or territory where they live stands for something identified with immensity and dispersion. This does not imply isolation, but rather an option to experience specific forms of social interaction in which nature – through water, earth, air and the underworld – turns the Amazonians into the sole owners of their immensity (territory).

In that sense, intimately linked time and space configures the indigenous peoples' own calendars that feature solar and lunar times or masculine and feminine ones. These transmit vitality to the Amazonian social and cultural world.

The passing of time in the three principal spaces according to the Amazonian Kychwa: in the mythology and in certain times of the *yachak*, time in Uku Pacha is more violent than in Kay Pacha. When three days pass in Uku Pacha, only one day will pass in Kay Pacha. In Awa Pacha, time is actually slower than in Kay Pacha, and is measured in thousands and millions of years. This is why the stars, the moon, and the sun can exist far longer than humans and still be persons like us. To the Amazonian Kychwa people, the concept of time in the more spiritual dimensions is closely identified with immortality, whereas in the Amazonian mundane existence, time signifies the experience of birth and death.

### 4.2 Land, territory or territorialism

These concepts constitute the essence of life for the Amazonian culture. It is an immense enclosure, comprising of hundreds of cultures, some in contact and others of which there is minimum information. The land is both father and mother, it is the giver of life because in her reside the rivers, the biodiversity: within her occur natural phenomena, such as rain, electric storms, floods, cataclysms etc. The laws are determined by land tenure in the immensity. Those who do not abide by them put their lives at risk. The land is the geographic space wherein cultures create and recreate their worldview.

### 4.3 The natural cycles

There are four natural cycles corresponding to the indigenous wisdom: the vital, agricultural-ecologic, ritual, and astral cycle.

The vital cycle corresponds to the comprehensive treatment of life, both human and animal, such as plants and other beings of nature. The ritual cycle endows culture with life under the form of festivities and rewards people with good health and the birth of new life. The astral cycle corresponds to the influx of heavenly bodies in human coexistence, in ritual practices, and in the numeric and astronomic knowledge of the Amazonian culture.

The agro-ecologic cycle is related to the changes that nature undergoes in the different seasons of the year in relation to agriculture practiced among peoples.

According to the Shuar culture, the agro-ecologic cycle has four moments that correspond with the changes of mother earth. The first corresponds to the preparation of the soil, during which the Shuar select the fertile soil, level it, extract the weeds, and turn it over. The second coincides with the sowing, during which the soil is fertilized, if necessary, the good seeds are selected and given to the earth so that it bears its best fruits. The third signifies clearing, and during this period the Shuar clear the weeds that grow in the cultivations and protect the plants, if necessary. The fourth represents the moment of harvesting. During this period, the Shuar thank nature for the fruit it bore, harvest, select their products to be consumed, and sell the rest. Agricultural work is carried out in accordance with the ecologic calendar of the Shuar, which makes time fluctuate between the time of abundance and scarcity<sup>7</sup>.

#### 4.4 Mythology

Indigenous mythology is found at the root of its worldview. It represents the collected knowledge of the peoples. Without mythology it is not possible to live according to the natural order of the indigenous temporal and spatial worlds, and it would not be possible to harmonize the vital cycles in the ways that give rise to the Amazonian cultures.

With this imaginary mythological conceptualism, the Amazonians have experienced understandings and misunderstandings with their own culture,

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<sup>7</sup> The meeting of Naitiak and the heart of palm. On certain occasion, Naitiak and a heart of palm had met on the road. Naitiak was carrying *sachapelma*, balsa and other products, not food for people, whereas the heart of palm came carrying many things: ripe fruits, manioc and more serviceable fruits. They met on the road and the heart of palm asked Naitiak where this had gone and he answered: "I went to feed the children who are dying of hunger." Then the heart of palm said to him that Naitiak should stand aside because Naitiak was making humanity die of hunger whereas he helped people survive. This is the reason why in the period of the heart of palm there is abundant food and fruit whereas in the period of Naitiak there is frequently scarcity of comestible products.

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with other cultures and with Westerners. Through mythology they have achieved historic contextual realizations that today uphold the lives of the Shuar, Amazonian Kichwa, Achuar, Cofán, Sápara, and Waodani peoples.

The entire society, all culture, and actually each individual leads his or her own life in relation to others, considering and respecting his or her costumes, myths and rites. In order to identify their units of analysis, the Amazonian researchers have previously undertaken a process of systemization of their mythology, as is shown next in relation to the myths of *Nantu*, *Tsunki* and *Shakaim*.

### *The myth of the moon (Nantu)*

"In the distant past there existed a carnivorous called Iwia, who one day found a pregnant woman by the name Wanupá, who in turn carried two eggs in her womb. Iwia killed this woman, and from the eggs were born two baby boys, one that was called the moon (Nantu) and the other the sun (Etsa). The two brothers lived together and developed gradually until they grew up."<sup>8</sup> The sun (Etsa) was jealous of his brother, and the two fought over a woman named Auju. The sun hit his brother the moon, and Nantu, being angry, rose to the skies forever. This is what the mythology tells, and the elderly tell that long ago the moon (Nantu) ascended to the sky and then descended along a vine that hung from the sun (Etsa) and reached down to the earth.

### *The myth of Tsunki of the Shuar people*

One day a Shuar went hunting with his dog which took a *guanta* (a rodent) from a cave and dropped it into a river. The Shuar started to look for it in the river, but was not able to find it. Instead, he saw a very beautiful snake laying on a rock. He took a stick and dropped it into the water. As he did not kill it, he returned home feeling gloomy. At dusk he gathered some tobacco leaves and went to sleep beside the river. Before falling asleep he inhaled tobacco juice through his nose, and when he reached ecstasy, a very beautiful woman appeared to him, and she related the following to him: "I was there today, you dropped me into the water with your stick. I'm the daughter of Tsunki and my name is Tsunkinua. The *guanta* that you were looking for was killed by my father for it is his archenemy and very dangerous to us. As you seem to be able

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<sup>8</sup> The ideas presented in this part of the text have been extracted from the reports of field research carried out in the Shuar communities by the student Octavio Kayap for the study of the Amazonian worldview.

to kill that animal easily, my father said that you should visit him." "How do I travel in such a river," asked the Shuar, and Tsunkinua insisted that she would take him. Meanwhile, the Shuar was falling very much in love and, spurred by this feeling, accepted the invitation, even though he was frightened of the deep water. Tsunkinua said to him that she would carry him, covering him with her beautiful long locks, and the Shuar asked her to let him breathe for a moment first. After this Tsunkinua plunged into the depths of the waters and swam until she arrived to the place where his father Tsunki was. Tsunki congratulated the Shuar and offered his own daughter to the man as a token of his gratitude.

They lived for a time in the water, but the Shuar did not adapt to the new environment and requested Tsunki that this would permit him to return to earth. This request was approved with many warnings. As the Shuar was already married, he transformed the woman Tsunkinua into a snake that went out to hunt every day and would then transform back into a woman. Tsunkinua became pregnant and was not able to go hunting, and the Shuar decided to leave her under a *pitiak* basket.

One day, out of curiosity, the Shuar's wife asked a child to take down the basket, and she found a snake inside, very swollen by the pregnancy. The woman was frightened and hit the snake with a stick. As the animal would not die, she picked up a burning log and burned it. At that moment the soil became moist and the snake sprouted water and sunk into the earth. Meanwhile, the land was covered in shadow, and torrential rains were unleashed everywhere. Seeing what was happening, the man returned immediately from his hunting, and when he came home he asked who had touched the basket. A girl told him that it was the mother who had found a snake and mistreated it and burned it with a burning log, and that the snake had sunk into the earth. The Shuar said to those present that now everyone would perish and that it was their fault. Having said this, he took the girl who had told him about what had transpired and went to a high hill where there was a palm tree, and climbed it. Meanwhile, the deluge began, and Tsunki exterminated all the peoples and animals in response to the battering of his daughter. The growing rivers almost reached the Shuar man. When the rivers returned to their original course, he descended the tree and started to procreate new life with the girl.

### *The myth of Shakaim*

Shakaim is the lord of the woods and the king of work. The elders tell that there were two workers by the name of Jempe and Yakakua who did all they



could to feed mankind. They had a great will to do good but lacked the proper tools, such as the axe, and this is why they could only clear the vegetation. When Shakaim became aware of this, he felt sorry for them and appeared to them in the middle of a lagoon, bringing them two axes, one for each. He sent them to work, saying: "Go to work but just leave the axe driven into a tree and I will take care of finishing all the work." However, the workers did not comply with the instructions.

The next day Shakaim returned to examine the results of the work and found out that Jempe had not worked and said to him: "Damn you Jempe for not obeying me and for working so little. For this, you will live the rest of your life drinking only water." And having said this, Shakaim blew at him. Then he went to see the work of Yakakua, and seeing that he had not done anything and that he had only been piling up rocks to mislead the women and make them believe he was hard working, Shakaim said to him: "You will be changed into a bird for disobeying my orders, and all your life people will tell you that you became a bird for being lazy." Then he blew at him to complete the curse. This is why today we the Shuar people, both men and women, have to work so arduously to feed ourselves.

### 4.5 The understanding of the life sciences

Theoretical natural science, employing Western imaginary concepts, classifies life on Earth into five kingdoms: vegetal, animal, mineral, monera and fungi, maintaining that there exist inert things that are not alive (stones, rocks etc.). These inanimate things have life in the eyes of indigenous peoples. In other words, for them everything in nature is animate. For example, the rocks and stones offer positive energies to human beings. Similarly, water gives life and revitalizes plants, animals, and man.

Natural sciences classify plants in determined phanerogams and cryptogams, the latter of which is associated with incomplete plants. That is to say, if plants did not possess complete structures, they would not have life. However, the plants themselves feel that they have everything, and that is precisely why they are alive. According to science, plants have a quantitative value, whereas to the Amazonian peoples plants do not have a mathematic value, but are rather a part of the whole. That is why plants must be cared for – they generate harmony in nature.

The classification of animals according to science holds the dichotomy of vertebrates and invertebrates as a starting point. In contrast, the indigenous peoples organize animals in a different manner into edibles, non-edibles,

fierce, birds, aquatics, etc. On many occasions, the use of medicinal plants is considered by science as unscientific knowledge, but for indigenous peoples, this represents real knowledge and proven results.

To Western science, ripping a leaf out of a plant does not bear much importance, whereas to the indigenous peoples that action should be done with the permission and authorization of the plant in order to reach effective results. The plant is considered to be a living being, respected and sacred, and it is thus able to transmit positive or negative energies according to the treatment it is subjected to.

The Amazonian region is rich in biodiversity. Just to mention one example, in one hectare of terrain we can see a great variety and quantity of insects, animals and plants, some of which are not known to science.

The myth of Nunkui is an excellent example of the different sense that animals and plants bear to the Amazonian people. "The elders tell that in ancient times the Shuar did not have any food and they fed themselves with the leaves of a plant called *unkuch*. One day a woman went out of her house in search of these leaves to the banks of a brook. Suddenly, she saw the skins of manioc, peanut and banana submerged in the water. She was surprised by this and followed the skins upstream until she found a group of women washing different products such as manioc, peanut and banana. She approached them and asked them to give these products to her, too. They said: 'don't ask us, don't you see that one lying down in the earth? Go to it and ask it for everything, and it will give you all you need.'"

#### 4.6 Relational knowledge: an approach to science

Under the above mentioned considerations, in the framework of recognizing the Amazonian logics, (configured by the indigenous mythology), and taking into consideration the importance of the Aristotelian logic, (configured by Western philosophy), the academic education of the Amazonian peoples is deconstructed under the principle of vital comprehension. This allows the indigenous people, without distinction, to feel and think, serving the referents of Western Hermeneutics with much creativity and imagination. The aim of this approach is to lay the foundations for an intercultural understanding that retrieves the most significant parts of Western science and Amazonian wisdom in order to favor vitality as a cultural form of harmony and respect in a dialogue which reaches a consensus.

Methodological exercises were done within this process, taking into consideration adequate and rigorous understanding of Western scientific models,

on the one hand, and contextual systemization of the Amazonian worldviews, on the other. The objective of the exercises was to bring about analytic deconstructions of Amazonian cultural practices, such as hunting, fishing, shamanism and marriage, with the aid of epistemological tools of Popperian falsification, Kuhnian paradigms and the Lakatosian research programs.

## 5 Some conclusions of the research process

These exercises made it possible to visualize the need to undertake a new deconstructive stance to methodological questions. The problem was not in formulating the research question in the style of rigorous scientific recommendations, but in categorizing it, again, in a relational way of thinking. Achieving this called for the rigorous comprehension of Amazonian everyday life, under the principle of vital and vitalizing experiences and comprehension, both individual and social. In addition, it was necessary to treat the vital cycles in concrete to accomplish the abovementioned methodological exercises. Only then was it possible to deconstruct the problem to a referent of a research process that can explain after comprehension and comprehend through explanation, that brings about qualification through quantifying and quantifies through qualification. Lastly, it is worth clarifying that the process is developed in the framework of cultural understanding with different but complementary philosophical matrixes.

This exercise altered the basis and widened the horizon of the methodological process in socio-cultural order and of the research design. Without undermining the importance of the qualitative and quantitative research methods, emphasis was given to the relational bonds (the principle of joint complementarity) between those who do research and the objects of research, the bonds between the objects of research and their mythological-wisdom matrices, and the bonds between their mythological-wisdom matrices and their socio-cultural expectations of life and good living.

Thus the "research design" or documents originating from contextual systematic knowledge were produced by the indigenous Amazonian students in the framework of a constant and perfectable interrelation process between feeling and thinking. But the concrete, real world is also interconnected with spirituality.

In addition to the possible methodological recommendations, the best tool that the program of education of the Amazonian researchers could bring them was an adequate atmosphere for the rigorous development of creativity and

imagination, in order to comprehend in a systematic way the indigenous social and cultural world and life from a relational point of view. That is, from the actually intercultural, from the necessary intercultural perspective.

In line with their other activities, the new Amazonian researchers were deconstructing conceptual tools (mind maps, concept maps, conceptual grids etc.), field work tools (observations, questionnaires, interviews, focus groups, workshops, case studies, reminiscing the past etc.) and tools for the systemization of the quantitative and qualitative information (statistical software SPSS and ATLASTi).

The systematized knowledge of the socio-cultural experiences of the Amazonian Ecuadorians is not yet found in texts systematically written in the mother or second language. Currently, the competencies of writing short, contextual essays are being developed, the purpose of which is to recover and analyze, using creativity and imagination, the vital quotidian experiences of the indigenous people, such as hunting, fishing, ritual practices (e.g. marriage) etc. The abovementioned methodological exercises have been realized using the languages that best communicate their "comprehensive discoveries".

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Chapter 3

# ACCOUNT OF A STUDY PROCESS SHARED WITH THE MAYAN PEOPLE IN GUATEMALA

Luis Javier Crisóstomo



## Summary

This brief description corresponds to the study experience of the promotion of intercultural bilingual education, planned and executed in Guatemala with the participation of the General Direction of Bilingual Intercultural Education (DIGEBI) and the National Council of Mayan Education (CNEM). The Institute of Linguistics and Education of the Rafael Landívar University of Guatemala was responsible for the execution of the study. The Institute relied on the technical and financial support of the Finnish Government through the Guatemalan Component of the Central American Program for Intercultural Multilingual Education (PROEIMCA).

This description contains the sociopolitical context of intercultural bilingual education and the people with whom the study was implemented; a brief summary of the conceptual framework which aims to interpret the contents of the study; the methodology utilized, with certain emphasis on the participation of Mayan organizations and researchers; the results obtained by the study, and some final conclusions and observations.

The execution of this work relied on the participation of different specialists who joined work groups either as principal researchers or field researchers and of persons who contributed their traditional knowledge and wisdom in appropriate moments during the implementation of the study. We wish to extend our gratitude to each of them.

## Acknowledgements

The team of the Guatemalan National Component of the Central American Program for Intercultural Multilingual Education (PROEIMCA) wishes to thank the Mayan specialists for contributing their traditional knowledge and wisdom and opening their significant places and their hearts in order for the study to be realized in their local communities in the different micro-regions of the country.

Our deepest appreciation goes to the General Direction of Bilingual Intercultural Education (DIGEBI) and the National Council of Mayan Education (CNEM) which supported the study by outlining, in a collaborative manner, the topics of interest for the development of intercultural bilingual Mayan education, intercultural bilingual education, and for observing the relevance of the study to the Mayan vision during the entire process.

Likewise, we wish to acknowledge the Institute of Linguistics and Education of the Rafael Landívar University of Guatemala, its team of investigators, and, in particular, the Mayan individuals who integrated into the study team.



## 1 Introduction

The study process presented here was developed in Guatemala in the framework of the Central American Program for Intercultural Multilingual Education (PROEIMCA). The program's objective, established in the *Documento Base de PROEIMCA (PROEIMCA Base Document)*, is "to realize studies on education based on an agenda defined with and agreed by consensus of research institutions and organs responsible for the management of intercultural bilingual education (IBE) in the education systems of the region. As far as the expected results of these studies are concerned, the academic units taking part in the study of intercultural bilingual education advance the process of revitalization and development of the languages and cultures of the different indigenous and afro-descendant peoples, and their talents and traditional knowledge and wisdom are incorporated in educational practices" (Finnish Foreign Ministry and the United Nations' Program for the Development of Guatemala, 2005, pp. 50–51).

The Institute of Linguistics and Education of the Rafael Landívar University of Guatemala was responsible for the study together with the Guatemalan Component of PROEIMCA and the Monitoring Committee and the Executive Regional Coordination of PROEIMCA. The Institute of Linguistics and Education was in charge of planning and executing the study, training researchers, and communicating the final results to different national and international participants.

The present document is a brief description of the development of the study. It contains, in a synthetic manner, in chapter 2, the sociopolitical context and an approach to the people with whom the study was conducted, the agreement which gave formality to its execution, as well as to the involvement of institutions and organizations such as the General Direction of Bilingual Intercultural Education (DIGEBI), the National Council of Mayan Education (CNEM), and the Central American Program for Intercultural Multilingual Education (PROEIMCA), the prioritization of the research agenda, and others. Chapter 3 discusses the conceptual framework which oriented the study in its substantial part. Chapter 4 presents the methodology, with a special emphasis on the description of the incorporation process of indigenous researchers as far as their contact/selection is concerned, participation of indigenous organizations, description of the process of obtaining information and the language used, and of the process of analysis and construction of categories. Chapter 5 refers to the results of the study through a simple and brief

description of the results in general, and chapter 6 presents some final conclusions and observations of both the Monitoring Committee and the principal researcher.

## **2 Sociopolitical context of intercultural bilingual education and approach to the people with whom the study was conducted**

Intercultural bilingual education in Guatemala is one of the educative modalities exposed to permanent changes with different government administrations. It is planned and oriented on the basis of the government's conjuncture decisions, with limitations in order to define more stable political lines by the State. This form of attention keeps bilingual education with little budgeting, minimal reach in the pre-primary and primary level, few bilingual Mayan-Spanish teachers in service, and the same situation in the administrative and technical component. In schools implementing it, the subject of Mayan as first language has been introduced in the first two grades of primary level without continuity in the next grades and levels. Moreover, the education materials are generally limited to books that support learning in reading and writing in the correspondent Mayan mother tongue, but there is a lack of resources that would support other areas of learning, such as mathematics, history of the people, arts, technology, and environment knowledge.

It should be noted that the initial training of teachers in the official sector is maintained today through the Intercultural Bilingual Teacher Training School of medium level, the immediate effects of which fall short of expectations in order to assume the planning and development of diverse skills and the use of two or more languages in local communities. It is also important to clarify that the approach to intercultural bilingual education, Mayan education, or education of indigenous peoples is recent, taking into consideration the culmination of the negotiations of the internal conflict in 1996, a stage in the country's history that made possible the discussion and taking some actions in favor of the wellbeing of indigenous peoples. Before the peace agreements, these subjects were considered subversive, and many Mayan leaders suffered the direct consequences of this political situation. Such situation also explains the very precarious advances with regard to education at the level of local communities, due to the fact that many interest groups and sectors still maintain reservations towards tending to the needs of the indigenous peoples

through public services. In fact, we can find within the very government employees and experts on school education persons with a very racist mindset and discrimination which limits to a certain degree the planning and execution of processes that should be brought to the attention of this large percentage of the population constituted by indigenous peoples.

On the other hand, the present generations of indigenous peoples harbor a certain distrust of the actions of any institution, seriously limiting the organization of and search for strategies that would allow a mobilization of the population to demand for the fulfillment of their rights to a school education based on their language, their culture, and their own aspirations. The young generations have no referents to compare the virtues of intercultural bilingual education. In Guatemala, a higher degree of schooling generates more possibilities to deny multiculturalism, based on the fact that the efforts of the traditional school focus on denying the languages, the cultures, and the indigenous peoples in order to Hispanicize the country and render it monocultural.

For the Government term 2008-2012, the Guatemalan Ministry of Education has presented the policies that will orientate school education work, which highlights the strengthening of intercultural bilingual education, the strategic objective of which, according to the *Documento de Políticas Educativas 2008–2012* (*Document on Educational Policies 2008–2012*) (Ministerio de Educación, 2008, pp. 1–4) is “the encouragement of the indigenous peoples’ culture and worldview through the consolidation of an appropriate, bilingual, and multicultural education that is incorporated into a global world”. In addition, the same document refers to a quality policy, the strategic aim of which in the curricular component is “to guarantee that the curricular tools, documents, and instruments correspond with the characteristics, needs, and aspirations of each of the peoples that form our country”.

The expectation of this term is to make some efforts a reality, especially at the classroom level of the intercultural bilingual school. In particular, expectations are focused on curricular development changes concentrated on the monolingual modality. The goal is to move into a curriculum that takes into account the knowledge of the different cultures of Guatemala and of the world and the use of two or more languages in schools at all levels.

## 2.1 A brief approach to the Mayan people

The state of Guatemala is formed by four peoples of which two are considered indigenous, one afro-descendent and one mixed. Among the two indigenous peoples is the Mayan, catalogued as having the most inhabitants to date. According to the *XI national Guatemalan population census*, the total population was 11.237.196 inhabitants, and out of this total, 4.610.440, that is 41% of the population, is of indigenous origin (República de Guatemala, Instituto Nacional de Estadística, 2002, pp. 13 and 30), among which we find the Mayan people.

The study for the promotion and development of intercultural bilingual education was realized with and among the Mayan people, which is formed by 22 sociolinguistic communities, each one with their own languages. According to researchers, these languages stemmed from one common language many years ago, and that today they retain many similarities in regard to principles, values, and cultural practices. In many cases, there is intelligibility between languages spoken in different sociolinguistic communities. Out of these sociolinguistic communities, four are considered to form the majority, based on their population. These are the Kaqchikel, Q'eqchi', Mam, and K'iche', which reside in North, Central and West Guatemala. The total number of habitants pertaining to these people is close to 4 million, and most of them speak their Mayan languages which have their present names. These people live according to the Mayan culture and use their traditional knowledge in their everyday life. They live in political, economic, and social conditions hardly favorable for the development and maintaining of their own culture and language. The following map shows the sociolinguistic communities that constituted the base for the present study: Q'eqchi', Kaqchikel, K'iche', and Mam.

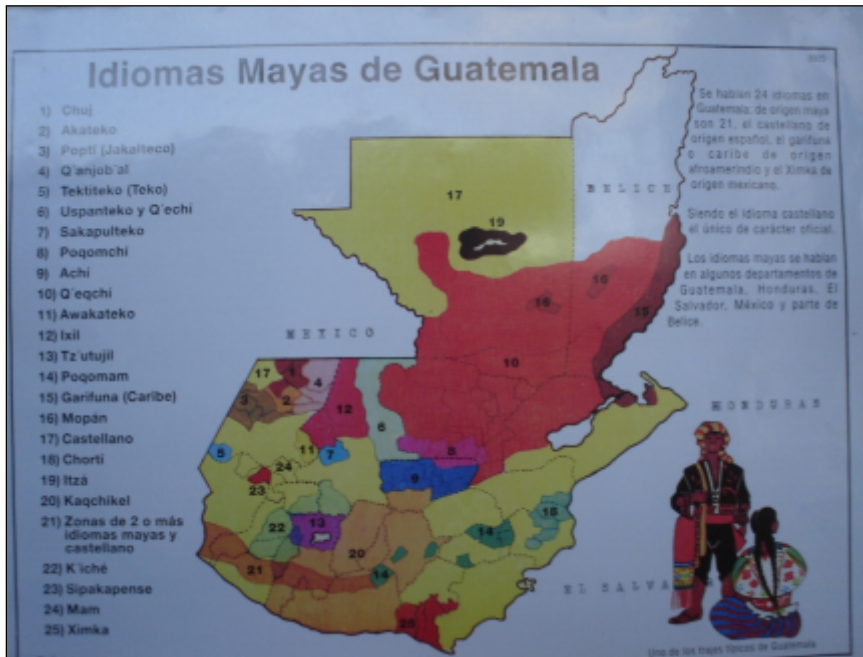


Photo 1 Map of the different linguistic groups in Guatemala

### 3 The organizational agreements in the planning and development of the study

The team of PROEIMCA's Guatemalan National Component, before initiating the talks over the study, carefully studied the meanings, implications, effects, and impacts of certain basic concepts in the state of the peoples' present-day life and in public services. In this way, according to the *Documento Base de PROEIMCA (PROEIMCA Base Document)*, the following elements were taken into consideration: worldviews and values of the indigenous peoples, agendas defined and agreed with research institutions and organs responsible for the management of intercultural bilingual education, the peoples' abilities and traditional knowledge and wisdom, as well as the concept of intercultural bilingual education that holds the indigenous peoples' culture and language as a basis (Finnish Foreign Ministry and the United Nations' Program for the Development of Guatemala, 2005, pp. 50–51).

The meaning and importance of the results were analyzed as products of a study centered on the enumerated concepts and completed in a participative manner, which for the Mayan people is of vital importance. The work proceeded to the elaboration of a specific document that was later shared with the technical personnel of the General Direction of Bilingual Intercultural Education (DIGEBI) and the National Council of Mayan Education (CNEM)<sup>1</sup>.

During the discussions it was considered relevant to obtain a product diverse in knowledge and wisdom and valid at present which would contribute both to school education and other efforts in economic, political, cultural, linguistic, and spiritual fields. The general aim is to achieve the highest possible quality of life for the Mayan population and other indigenous peoples of the country.

With this effort, it is hoped to respond to the lack of actions to include into the school curriculum diverse curricular areas which study a significant part or part of the life of the indigenous peoples and improve it. This would counteract the planned and intentional work of erasing these studies of the correspondent geographical and state contexts. In reality, it is a question of work centered on the traditional knowledge and wisdom of the Mayan people, on the perceptions of indigenous organizations and leaders, which help us to bring said knowledge in different areas of the discussion. In this way, little by little, opportunities for concrete uses for the knowledge may present themselves, making possible a certain degree of wellbeing for the same population that holds and uses it.

*Acuerdo de Identidad y Derechos de los Pueblos Indígenas (The Agreement of the Identity and Rights of the Indigenous Peoples)*, in referring to the traditional knowledge of the indigenous peoples, mentions that "the existence and value of the scientific and technological Mayan knowledge is recognized, as is the knowledge of the other indigenous peoples. This knowledge must be recovered, developed, and divulged" (Gobierno de Guatemala y la Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca, 1995, p. 10).

In the meetings between the Central American Program for Intercultural Multilingual Education (PROEIMCA), the General Direction of Bilingual Intercultural Education (DIGEBI), and the National Council of Mayan Education (CNEM), a priority was given to a study agenda paying attention to the needs of intercultural bilingual education, the process of the up and running education reform, and the Peace Agreements. Special attention was given to

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<sup>1</sup> The committee is a minor council formed by four persons who administrate the actions and lead the tasks coming from the repercussions of the decisions of the major council formed by different organizations and institutions of Mayan education.

the abovementioned Agreement of the Identity and Rights of the Indigenous Peoples, which specifically points out the need to have an education system that takes into consideration the worldview of the peoples that form the State of Guatemala. This agreement mentions that the education system “must respond to the cultural and linguistic diversity of Guatemala, recognizing and reinforcing the indigenous cultural identity, the values and education systems of the Mayan people and of the other indigenous peoples” (Gobierno de Guatemala y la Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca, 1995, pp. 10-11). The classroom and the general basic education school form a reference environment. Today, this environment exhibits major deficiencies and absences in regard to the effort of reinforcing the use of the languages and knowledge of the Mayan people.

The National Component of the Central American Program for Intercultural Multilingual Education (PROEIMCA) went on to write the Terms of Reference that was shared with the technical personnel and the Steering Committee of the Institute of Linguistics and Education of the Rafael Landívar University for the correspondent technical talks and agreements, the use of the possible products obtained out of the study, and the training of researchers, both men and women, during the study process. This modality of training of researchers was preferred due to the experience on university careers that in many cases are dedicated only to the theory part and very little is achieved in studying the practical part in depth. Present in these meetings of technical work were the Central American Program for Intercultural Multilingual Education (PROEIMCA), the General Direction of Bilingual Intercultural Education (DIGEBI), the National Council of Mayan Education (CNEM), and the Institute of Linguistics and Education of the Rafael Landívar University.

We recognize the importance of these observations, discussions, debates, and contributions for the entity responsible of the study in steering its efforts following the nature of the required study, the actual conditions in which the Mayas are living in, the characteristics and needs of the Mayan people, the framework of necessities of intercultural bilingual education, the state of Mayan education, and taking into account the globalization of different technological, economic, and politic mediums. Specifically, we recognize the efforts of different groups of both the official sector and the civil society in regard to taking on the subject of indigenous peoples and intercultural bilingual education, with an emphasis on working on the basis of the Peace Agreements. However, in the case of school education, as was mentioned before, the

provision at the primary level is reduced to the course on Mayan as mother tongue, and generally only in the first grades.

The Institute of Linguistics came up with a technical proposal that was presented to the Vice-Ministry of Intercultural and Bilingual Education in different meetings and with the participation of the entities previously mentioned. Starting from the planning and implementation of the study under the responsibility of the University, forms of cooperation in the different stages of the study were agreed on in order to have contribution opportunities based on the vision of the Mayan people, enriching both the discussion and the learning environment of the leaders of the General Direction of Bilingual Intercultural Education (DIGEBI) and the National Council of Mayan Education (CNEM).

### 3.1 Monitoring of the study

From the beginning of the program, a Monitoring Committee was formed for the whole of the activities, not only for the study, having as a reference framework the participative process mentioned in the *Documento Base de PROEIMCA (PROEIMCA Base Document)*. Subsequently, a solution was sought which would integrate this actor in the Agreement to be signed for the execution of the study.

The Monitoring Committee organized work meetings on precise subjects of the study which included the discussion of conceptual questions, the prioritization of subjects starting from the needs of intercultural bilingual education, Mayan culture, and intercultural bilingual Mayan education, as well as contributions to the contents of the different stages of the study. The Central American Program for Intercultural Multilingual Education (PROEIMCA), the General Direction of Bilingual Intercultural Education (DIGEBI), and the National Council of Mayan Education (CNEM) were represented in these meetings. According to the Cooperation Agreement, the Monitoring Committee's role consisted of "watching over the enriching of the observations on the study process and the integration of researchers and other personnel" (Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo Guatemala y Universidad Rafael Landívar, 2006, p. 6).

The hiring of researchers was the responsibility of the Institute of Linguistics of Rafael Landívar University, for being the entity subcontracted for the execution of the study. The role of the Monitoring Committee was limited to giving recommendations in order for the University to contract researchers,



based on proposals of the General Direction of Bilingual Intercultural Education (DIGEBI) and the National Council of Mayan Education (CNEM).

The taking on of these types of practices for the development of studies into Mayan knowledge and wisdom has a special importance for the Monitoring Committee. This importance rose particularly from the small attention given to the study in wider fields of society, such as public services (education, health, justice system, etc.), contrasting with the number of inhabitants and their correspondent cultural practices. The meager attention was noted, for example, in the search for key participants for support in the academic world, at the hearts of the research centers pertaining to indigenous organizations, as well as in the contributions to the decentralization and/or contextualization of the base national curriculum to local levels.

On the other hand, the Monitoring Committee maintains that it is relevant to implement the study in different spheres of everyday life together with participants who know, live, and maintain the knowledge and wisdom of the Mayan people today. In particular, the National Council of Mayan Education (CNEM) works so that the Mayan education present in everyday life can receive some kind of support from the different institutions of the Guatemalan State.

### 3.2 Thematic focus, orienting phases and objectives of the study

We recognize the existence of studies on the Mayan culture realized by national researchers and those from other countries. However, the majority of these works report interpretations stemming from the vision of the researchers, which do not necessarily correspond with that of the indigenous peoples. In many cases, these studies contribute very little to the development of the peoples that are the object of study. In addition, the studies recognize superficially or not at all the specialist holders of the knowledge when they treat these as simple informants. With this framework as a basis, the Monitoring Committee presented to the Rafael Landívar University the general lines of the *Investigación para la promoción y desarrollo de la EBI en el Sistema Educativo Nacional de Guatemala* (Study for the promotion and development of IBE in the Guatemalan national education system), in which the following prioritized subject matter is outlined: "a. How the Mayan children learn in their culture, and the classroom processes they are involved in; b. Mayan knowledge: Person, Nature, and Cosmos; Mayan medicine; the environment; Mayan technology; dialogues and speech; mental strategies; time;

norms and values of everyday life, and; c. formation of a minimum team of researchers" (Componente Nacional Guatemala del Programa de Educación Intercultural Multilingüe de Centroamérica PROEIMCA-PNUD Guatemala, 2005, pp. 4–5). The most interesting thing is the fact of having diverse knowledge that can be eventually mediated to materials directed to different users, most importantly to school-age children.

On this base of minimum agenda, the University presented the study plan in which are mentioned, among others, the following objectives: "systemizing the knowledge of indigenous peoples in order to promote its study, reinforcement, and development in the pedagogic process of basic education; finding support for curricular foundation and strengthening the multidisciplinary and multilingual researcher teams, with ethnic and gender equality" (Universidad Rafael Landívar, 2006), the central theme of study being *Conocimientos mayas en la vida cotidiana (Mayan knowledge in everyday life)* (Instituto de Lingüística y Educación, 2007, p. 2). In the talks that went with the study of the central theme, the members of the Monitoring Committee recommended the use of Mayan epistemology to orientate the planning, execution, and interpretation of data related to this phase of the study.

According to the Informe de Sistematización y aprendizajes del proceso de investigación (Report on systemization and learning of the study process), presented by the Institute of Linguistic and Education (2007, pp. 2–23), the study progressed in four major stages in its first phase.

The first stage started with the search for transformative Mayan knowledge, preparatory talks, and the basic planning work. Next, the work focused on the state of the subject matter and the conceptual theoretical framework. Third, a selection and training of the research team was realized.

The second stage began with the inducement and training of researchers, continued with socio-territorial exploitation; and ended with writing of monographs.

The third stage started with the execution of the second workshop of inducement-training of the researchers, continued with immersion into everyday life and the conducting of extensive interviews, and finished with the organization of discussion workshops around the information gathered.

The fourth stage of the study first dedicated time for the physical organization of study material and documents, continued with the systemization and analysis of the information, and concluded with the systemization of the experience in general.

For the first stage of the study, according to *Encantamiento de la Realidad. Conocimientos mayas en prácticas sociales de la vida cotidiana* (The enchantment of reality, Mayan knowledge in social practices of everyday life) (Dirección General de Educación Bilingüe Intercultural y Universidad Rafael Landívar, 2007, p. 13), the central study question established for the principal researcher team was: “How are the social practices of K’iche’, Kaqchikel, Q’eqchi’, and Mam persons, the relations between processes of identity construction, and the generation of Mayan knowledge manifested?” This study question is based on the fact that today the Mayan people state that their knowledge and wisdom are in use and continue to be created and recreated – even in rather unfavorable conditions – with the clarification that the study should develop based on concepts and proceedings utilized by the Mayas themselves.

The selection of the subject matter of the study was discussed also through the Monitoring Committee, in view of the stand and interpretation of non-Mayan researchers, who maintained that all things Mayan belong to the past and bear no relation whatsoever with what is found in today’s sociolinguistic communities.

In regard to the training of researchers, the Institute of Linguistics and Education took on a process that included specific stages to enhance the capacity of the team to implement the study with a specific agenda. To this end, the Institute guaranteed the participation of facilitators who had knowledge and mastery of certain particularities of the indigenous cultures of the country and the Mayan people in particular. The phases looked at different activities under the direct responsibility of researchers until the publication of the final product of the study.

### 3.3 Cultural mediation

According to the *Informe de Sistematización y aprendizajes del proceso de investigación* (Report on systemization and learning of the study process) of this first phase of the study, this work was done “sharing and participating in the study of practices of Mayan knowledge in everyday life, and exercising, at the same time, an epistemological watch, that is to say, adopting a Mayan view on all things Mayan. This was done during and in the end of the study in the four Mayan linguistic communities, with the cooperation of the researchers of the four areas: K’iche’, Mam, Kaqchikel, and Q’eqchi’” (Instituto de Lingüística y Educación, 2007, p. 30). Likewise, cultural mediation is treated

in this phase. This mediation forms part of the internal organizational strategy of the Rafael Landívar University, under responsibility of a Mayan researcher-cultural mediator. The task of this person was to deepen the conscious observation from the Mayan point of view and guarantee its presence in the conceptual framework, in the forms of field information gathering, and in the organization and interpretation of the obtained information.

For the Monitoring Committee, cultural mediation is indispensable, in particular when the principal research team and the field researchers do not have at their disposal persons with critical knowledge of the depths of the Mayan culture or any other culture that is being studied at a given moment. In this case, the principal research team was made up of Spanish speakers, and it was deemed necessary to incorporate a cultural mediator in order to respond partly to the requirements of the Mayan view on all things Mayan. Cultural mediation would translate as the effort to interpret partly or totally the study process from the point of view of the Mayan people at the start of the observations, during the development of the study, and at the moment of interpreting the results.

In addition to the cultural mediation described in other fields of participation, the Monitoring Committee had the opportunity to support the planning, execution, and interpretation of the field data in order to obtain results that would offer a diversity of knowledge to different users in the public services of Guatemala.

## **4 A brief framework of the conceptual approach**

The coordination of the study by the National Component of the Central American Program for Intercultural Multilingual Education (PROEIMCA) and the National Council of Mayan Education (CNEM), suggested from the onset of the study to contemplate the use of basic concepts in the discussions of groups of specialist of the local communities and Mayan intellectuals. These concepts explain the facts of everyday life, covering fields such as family, community, communal parties, etc., and refer to basic knowledge, such as medicine, spirituality, agriculture, etc.

In the document *Investigación Educativa y la Educación Maya Bilingüe Intercultural* (Study on education and Mayan intercultural bilingual education) (Componente Nacional del Programa de Educación Intercultural Multilingüe de Centroamérica, PROEIMCA, 2006), certain basic concepts are briefly deve-

loped. Among them are mentioned the natural cosmic unity, which refers to the indissoluble links between men, Mother Nature and the Cosmos; spirituality as the energy or life that belongs to everyone and indicates that the person is not the only living being. Also the document refers to the fact that in the Mayan thinking, the study of the person is done in an integral way, taking into consideration the physical, mental, spiritual, affective, and emotional components. The Monitoring Committee adopted and recommended the use of these basic concepts that are constituted in some of the principles of interpretation of the reality from the viewpoint of Mayan culture. At the same time, the work rested on the concepts that are pointed out in the sections of the Documento Base de PROEIMCA (PROEIMCA Base Document) (Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores de Finlandia y Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo Guatemala, 2005, pp. 49–51), such as “worldview and values of the different ethnic groups, revitalization and development of the traditional skills, knowledge, and wisdom”.

The Monitoring Committee made the corresponding recommendations in order for the conceptual framework and its argumentation to be realized on the basis of each of the Mayan languages used in the local communities to facilitate its identification, comprehension, and in-depth explanation. Thus the goal was to reach a situation where the users of the Mayan languages developed their capacity to be present in any study work and in opportunities to create and recreate their knowledge.

To have a brief outlook of the conceptual framework of the result of the first phase of the study, extracts from the book *El Encantamiento de la Realidad. Conocimientos mayas en prácticas sociales de la vida cotidiana* (The enchantment of reality, Mayan knowledge in social practices of everyday life) (Dirección General de Educación Bilingüe (DIGEBI) e Instituto de Lingüística y Educación, 2007) are presented. The extracts affirm that the principal research team establish as the focus of the study the critical transformative interculturality, which is an analysis “to realize studies on topics where socio-culturally different participants interact” (ibid, p. 41) and “set out a conceptual framework that treats power as a result of historically constructed relations of control (structural, structuralized, and structuralizing)” (ibid, p. 41). The conceptual framework of this study recognizes that the “relations of power are intercultural when they intertwine and confront among them socio-culturally different participants, located in physical territories. These participants are immersed in a dense fabric of relations, intra and intercultural, and in territorialized economic processes. In these contexts, the persons and social partici-

pants interact and at times fight with each other through multiple forms, discourses, and communication systems" (ibid, p. 42). In a detailed manner, the conceptual framework "adopts a critical approach to the asymmetries and inequalities that prevail in the interactions between socioculturally different participants" (ibid, p. 72).

El Encantamiento de la Realidad. Conocimientos mayas en prácticas sociales de la vida cotidiana (The enchantment of reality, Mayan knowledge in social practices of everyday life) emphasizes that the focus of the critical-transformative interculturality also studies the intercultural relations in fields such as the economy, territory, identity, and communication, and for this end it makes use of a group of conceptual instruments of multidisciplinary character (ibid, p. 43). This multidisciplinary effort responds to the fact that the Mayan culture sees reality in an integral way. The themes that made possible the link between concrete reality and the critical-transformative intercultural focus were, among others, the themes of "culture and interculturality, Mesoamerica, matrix space of Mayan civilizational tradition, the economy and territory, the power of social structures, social actors and communication, praxis and transformation" (ibid, p. 43). To deal with this complex richness of events in the Mayan daily life, according to the Informe de Sistematización y aprendizajes del proceso de investigación (Report on systemization and learning of the study process), the use of concepts such as phenomenology and complexity were resorted to in order to implement the study, taking into account that "the study of useful knowledge for the positive transformation of the reality and the life of the Mayan peoples must be approached from the paradigm of complexity and transdisciplinarity" (Instituto de Lingüística y Educación, 2007, p. 2).

In the culture and interculturality section of the book El Encantamiento de la Realidad. Conocimientos mayas en prácticas sociales de la vida cotidiana (The enchantment of reality, Mayan knowledge in social practices of everyday life) (2007), a critique is done toward the current interculturality discourse and practices in Guatemala. At the same time, it recognizes the concept of interculturality as the best elaborated one. In this way, it refers "to a pluralist approach on human relations that should exist between culturally different participants in the context of a democratic and participative State, in a pluricultural, multilingual, and multiethnic Nation" (ibid, p. 46), taking as a basis the principles of citizenship, the right to being different, and the principle of unity in diversity. On the other hand, the study recognizes the need to "study and analyze the relations of power in order to understand them and to yield

knowledge that will be useful to implement social transformation practices" (ibid, p. 48).

When *El Encantamiento de la Realidad. Conocimientos mayas en prácticas sociales de la vida cotidiana* (The enchantment of reality, Mayan knowledge in social practices of everyday life) talks of Mesoamerica, "it seeks to understand the Mesoamerican social processes and their impact on the history of the region. This perspective seeks to construct the histories of the social groups, taking into account the economic and political relations within its cultural context" (2007, p. 49), as is the case with the Mayan people, situated in the Mesoamerican region since several thousand years.

With the concepts of economy and territory, the writers try to analyze "the way in which the economic conditions of production and reproduction of the social groups are expressed in the forms and contents of the intercultural relations (...); treating especially the links between economy and territory is crucial, because the genesis of the socioeconomic system and the country's political culture are marked by the stripping of the Mayan people's territory and the slavery of the persons" (ibid, p. 52). Even in these historic conditions, the Mayan people maintain the use of their traditional knowledge and wisdom and manifests in different ways its thinking on this unjust economic situation.

In approaching power and social structures, it is stated on the one hand, following both Lévi Strauss as well as Marx, "that the structures are not directly visible and observable realities, but rather levels of the reality that exists beyond visible relations between men. The function of the social structures constitutes the profound logic of a social system, the apparent order of which must be explained based on the underlying order". On the other, "following Richard Adams, power is referred to as the aspect of social relations which indicates the relative equality of the participants, or units, or operation, and derives of the relative control exercised by each actor or unity over the elements of the atmosphere that concerns the participants" (ibid, p. 57).

When we talk about social actors, in the *El Encantamiento de la Realidad. Conocimientos mayas en prácticas sociales de la vida cotidiana* (The enchantment of reality, Mayan knowledge in social practices of everyday life), these are understood "as sociocultural actors, to implicate the principle of the symbolic-meaningful field and the identity in the construction of the concept. It is unavoidable to treat the question of identity, given that the actor, as a type of subject (social), provided with historic sense, could not pass to collective political action without processes of auto representation and comprehension of the other social subjects (...) which act politically identified among

them by interests and characteristics that stem from a common project of social transformation" (ibid, p. 60).

Lastly, based on the idea of communication, praxis, and transformation, the following questions are analyzed: "How are the relations of power realized, communicated, and signified? What importance do those meanings have in the social practices of the participants? How, from different participants, are the social transformations interpreted that occur by reason of these practices?" (ibid, p. 69).

## 5 Methodological considerations

The Monitoring Committee presented to the Rafael Landívar University the document *Investigación para la promoción y desarrollo de la EBI en el Sistema Educativo Nacional de Guatemala* (Study for the promotion and advancement of IBE in the Guatemalan national education system), which mentions the recommendations on the general proceeding of the study. In relation to the selection of researchers and taking into account the profile of the study, the Committee requested that these were "professional researchers or students of careers related to IBE, candidates, and other students of the degree in IBE, anthropology, pedagogy, philosophy, education, law, applied linguistics in education, medicine, etc., or with proven experience in intercultural bilingual education; bilingual, indigenous language and Spanish, and monolingual Spanish speakers (Componente Nacional Guatemala. Programa de Educación Intercultural Multilingüe de Centroamérica PROEIMCA-PNUD Guatemala, 2005, pp. 5–6). The aim of these specifications was to respond to the requirements based on the vision of the Mayan people and to support the process and the identification of actual Mayan knowledge in different fields. Among the institutions that took on the proposal of researchers was the National Component of the Central American Program for Intercultural Multilingual Education (PROEIMCA) and the National Council of Mayan Education (CNEM), including the criterion that these were technical personnel that worked in the said institutions.

The Rafael Landívar University was in charge of implementing the specific methodology of the study process and to select the researchers, taking into account, as far as possible, the profile proposed by the Monitoring Committee. The selected researchers were not necessarily the ones proposed by the above mentioned institutions, given that these institutions did not have at that mo-



ment sufficient personnel to take on the study responsibilities full time. Because of this, the University selected Mayan researchers of the corresponding sociolinguistic communities, although not from the established specific sample. On the other hand, the National Component of PROEIMCA Guatemala recommended that the principal research team would include a professional of Mayan origin, for whom it would be easy to identify different basic transcendental concepts for the study and who would explain from inside the Mayan culture the different events that could be encountered in the course of the study. As a result of these recommendations, the Rafael Landívar University decided to include in the team a Mayan woman who would be responsible for cultural mediation in the course of the different stages.

The institutions that form part of the Monitoring Committee managed and continue to manage information regarding the conditions and the grade of validity of the use of Mayan knowledge in different regions of the country. Because of this, it was recommended to the University to adopt as work space for the development of the study the local communities with a high degree of Mayan cultural life. The aim of such decision was linked to the possibility of accessing information of greater relevancy (knowledge and its argumentation, the meeting and dialogue with the holder of such knowledge, used instruments, etc.), in order to support the curricular design and development as well as the Mayan culture in general.

In relation to the selection of the locations of study, the *Informe de Sistematización y aprendizajes del proceso de investigación* (Report on systemization and learning of the study process) (Instituto de Lingüística y Educación, 2007, pp. 7–8) shows eight municipalities in four departments: Alta Verapaz, Quiché, Chimaltenango, and Huehuetenango, situated in the sociolinguistic communities K'iche', Mam, Q'eqchi', and Kaqchikel. The following aspects, among others, guided this selection: "systemized bibliographic information, expert opinions on municipalities known for their dense Mayan socioculture, different accessibility conditions, socioeconomic situation, rural state of the municipality, and the state of the political and security situation" (ibid).

The obtaining of the information on Mayan knowledge in use in everyday life was done through field work. This work was the responsibility of the researchers who worked under the orientation of the principal research team, which gave direct and periodic support in the field.

The first approach to the local communities was done to realize a direct recognition, establish initial contacts, and identify informants and families

with possibilities of supporting the study. In this first approach, the researchers made use of the mother language of the location for communication. A second field approach was done in order for each researcher to stay and live with a family for a longer time in the local community, with the objective of closely observing the events and the use of knowledge in everyday life through participant observation, the use of interviews, and a field diary, managed with care and rigor. The third meeting with the local communities was done to know the depths of the interactions and experiences of the persons considered as experts and holders of Mayan knowledge. To achieve this, the researchers made use of interviews, tapings, photographic registries, pictures, and the technique of “the River of life”<sup>2</sup> of the interviewees (ibid, pp. 13–16).

Subsequently, the work continued to the discussion of the results obtained of the field work. Workshops were initially realized to this end between the researchers and the persons who contributed the knowledge “with the objective of confronting critically the obtained findings during the field work. At the same time, it meant a first devolution of the results to the members of the communities that participated in the study” (ibid, p. 19).

Next, the work proceeded into the physical organization of material and documents of the study, to the systemization and analysis of the information. In this phase, the knowledge was classified, taking into consideration the diversity of the obtained information, and was later discussed with the members of the Monitoring Committee. The mentioned *Informe de Sistematización* (*Report on Systemization*) continues to mention that subsequently the principal research team completed a classification to present the contents in the following manner: “a) social organization and political action in Mayan communities; b) territory and economy; c) sacred worlds, and d) communication and art” (ibid, p. 21). The Monitoring Committee and the principal research team of the Institute of Linguistics and Education agreed that the product of the first phase deserved monitoring in regard to the need to deepen the theoretical framework based on the epistemology of the Mayan knowledge in order to continue identifying knowledge in use in everyday life.

The research team recognizes that, as far as the communication of the study process and of the results is concerned, the work takes the character of study-action.

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<sup>2</sup> An interview technique that encourages the interviewees to compare the course of their life with a drawing of a river that allows taking into consideration experiences and the elements of the context.

## 6 Communicating the results of the study

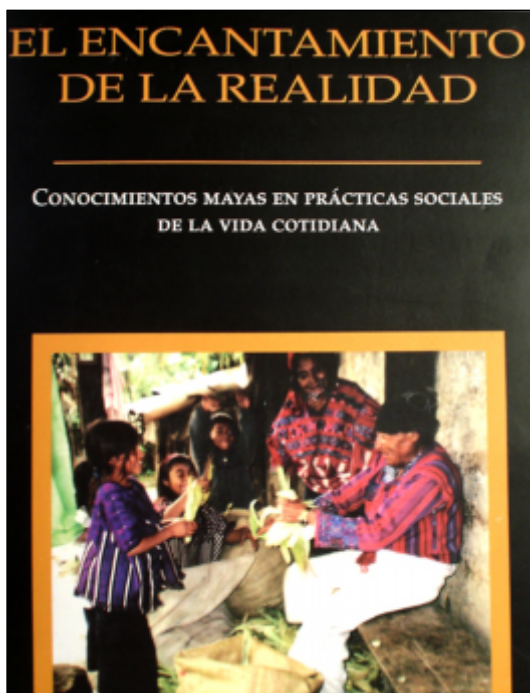


Photo 2            The Enchantment

The final product obtained of this first phase of the study is the book titled *El Encantamiento de la Realidad*. Conocimientos mayas en prácticas sociales de la vida cotidiana (The enchantment of reality, Mayan knowledge in social practices of everyday life) (Dirección General de Educación Bilingüe (DIGEBI) and Instituto de Lingüística y Educación, 2007), the contents of which is summarized below.

The knowledge contributed by the Mayan specialists was organized into four chapters under the themes sacred worlds; territory and economy; social organization and political action in the Mayan communities; communication and art; final observations and conclusions. It should be noted that different names were presented to classify the obtained information, and through a series of meetings with the Monitoring Committee, the research team opted for the abovementioned classification.



Photo 3 Mam specialist

The first chapter refers to the specialists of the knowledge as *abuelo quemador*<sup>3</sup>, *comadrona*<sup>4</sup>, or the authorities of the local community, the practices in the communitarian life, the imbalances that these might deal with, the mediums that are used, and possible events for preparing other persons of the community to continue with the practices, etc. In this first chapter of *The enchantment of reality*, the specialists of the Mayan knowledge are presented, and it is possible to identify "the hidden Mayan knowledge, its potential to approach other universes of reality, and the course of the Mesoamerican civilization thus far cut short" (ibid, p. 18).

This knowledge is hidden to the eyes of different participants, in particular to those who fight to eliminate from the national panorama the presence and use of the languages and practices that generate such knowledge. In addition, we have the situation in which the Mayan people is found. In many cases,

<sup>3</sup> Abuelo Quemador (Grandfather Burner) is the name by which the researchers call the Mayan specialist, who is dedicated to watching over the welfare of the village.

<sup>4</sup> The name Comadrona (Midwife) belongs to the Mayan specialist who takes care of, among others, the development and birth of children from conception to the first moments and years of life.

faced with so much pressure, they are yielding and little by little moving away from their cultural richness. For the case of the Mayan specialists, their knowledge is part of everyday life, it is manifested in a spontaneous manner, serves as part of their mission, and is of service to the persons who turn to it to balance diverse situations.

The second chapter develops the theme of territory and economy. In it can be found, among others, knowledge and practices concerning the land, the ceremonies and altars, the celebrations of birth, and the persons' different responsibilities in the community. It also presents the economic activities and dynamics of the community, the responsibilities of service to the community, the migration and ceremonies that are related to different economic activities, and especially the Mayan persons' emigration to the USA, and others. Similarly, it presents the cultivation of corn, and the use and significance of water in the lives of the Mayan people. In this second chapter "we observe different forms of relations that people have with the land. Here we can see that for the communitarians, the land is mother, an intelligent and powerful being. In addition, we learn how the complexity and indivisibility of what is real is physically manifested" (ibid, pp. 18–19). Here we begin to see clearly the suffering of the land and its effects on the health and wellbeing of the persons, who also lament and seek explanations as to how to maintain actions and thinking that favor everyone's health. We also read of the memories of how they learned their knowledge concerning the tending of the land.

Chapter three presents the social organization and political action of the Mayan communities. This chapter explains, among other things, the Mayans' own organizational structure, or of another entity, such as the authorities who represent the State, the indigenous mayoralties, the political parties, responsibilities of the women, the Mayan families, the grandparents. We also present conflicts, their participants, the resolution of some cases, and the harsh memories of the civil war. It is important to recognize in the study that even in the adverse conditions, the Mayan population still maintains much of the values, proceedings, and structures that offer services for all the inhabitants of the communities. Having said this, there is also concern for the lack of concrete strategies and actions by the Guatemalan State to support their upholding and reinforcement.

Chapter four presents communication and art, and explains, among others, the form of naming, saying, thinking, and doing in everyday life, the art and the techniques of weaving, different myths and stories that exist in the communities, and offers a brief overview of what Mayan knowledge is treated or

studied in the official schools. It is in here, according to *The enchantment of reality*, where we observe “how in the language the conceptions of the persons in respect to their environment are objectified, and the form in which they name themselves” (ibid, p. 20).

Through the arts, much of the knowledge and wisdom that are in force today are maintained, recreated, and adapted. Also, persons of all ages and of both sexes participate, and they are exercised in diverse environments. Yet, the difficult conditions in which the arts are currently practiced must not be disregarded. This study product has been presented to institutions and organizations of the Mayan and other people and to universities in the departments that were the headquarters of the field work, which has increased interest toward the subject.



Photo 4      Presentation of *The Enchantment* in Cobán

Next, a series of examples are listed, that were taken out of the contents of *El Encantamiento de la Realidad. Conocimientos mayas en prácticas sociales de la vida cotidiana* (The enchantment of reality, Mayan knowledge in social practices of everyday life) (pp. 120–130), and that show the sacred character of the territory as the Mayas experience it today.

The land is a person, according to what a young *kaqchikel* learned from his grandparent, at the moment of recognizing that the sacred lands are alive and existing. The lands want to help us, and have much favors and service in their power. The Mayans know that the sacred lands, all of them, are alive. They know this when they think in *Kaqchikel*. The agricultural ceremonies and their identification with the territory is important, as is the case with the *q'eqchi'* – at the time of realizing the ceremony of the sowing, that is called *k'ajb'ak* – when the father of the family deposits the first seed, followed by prayers, food, and other acts. For the Mayans, territory is presented in their imaginary world, as is the case of mount *T-xe Paxil* in *mam* territory, considered as the mother of corn, for being the place where the corn was shown; or the case manifested by the *K'iche'* when they recognize that the land belongs to the forebears, and a person lives in it thanks to their grace. This means that a person is not the owner of the land, but that the land is lent as an act of hospitality, or as a young *kaqchikel* says when mentioning that the mount has a lord and it is very jealous of its property, which is why it does not let itself be disturbed. In their territories, the Maya have their altars that are places where they attend to thank for the life of everyone and give ceremony to the lord of the place. The *q'eqchi'es* say that values such as honesty and strength of the body and the spirit feed on the territory, of which the daughters and sons drink. The *mame*, for example, make offerings for the birth, given that there are places where daughters and sons are sown when they are born. This means that the newly born are offered to Mother Earth, since they are the seeds and will be the fruits of the land. In the Mayan territories, we can find grandparent trees that are witnesses of the acts of persons. In regard to the land, there are also matters that can be glimpsed at, such as health, possession, the contamination of rivers and lakes, which are themes that keep Mayas permanently preoccupied.

## 7 Some observations on the study process

To the Monitoring Committee and in particular to the Guatemalan National Component of PROEIMCA, the study reaffirms the existence of the Mayas' own epistemology that is in use and is created and recreated even in adverse conditions in all fields, including family, communal, and institutional spaces.

The existence of a series of principles, values, practices, and events is reaffirmed through the presence of specialists of Mayan knowledge who live, practice, and share its meaning and use with the young generations via proceedings that find meaning in the events of today's quotidian life.

The Mayan knowledge and wisdom in use through the existence and practice of politics, economic, mathematic, health, and spiritual events, confirm a multitude of similarities of principles, values, and practices common between the different sociolinguistic communities, and thus are common for the Mayan people, the validity of which becomes apparent with the use of the Mayan languages.

I wish to point out the concern over the adverse conditions and circumstances in which Mayan knowledge and wisdom survives, that together with the holders of this knowledge are unwilling to die out. I also wish to see in the coming years a conscious compromise to begin an integral process that would lead to a world with more possibilities of maintaining, recreating, adapting, and creating all things Mayan. This concern explains the presentation of urgent proposals of Mayan education, intercultural bilingual Mayan education, curriculum by people, and other measures that can dedicate the necessary attention and resources in order for the language, culture, knowledge, and values to be studied and developed in schools of all levels.

On the other hand, I wish to state my conviction on the possibility of planning and executing studies that respond to the needs, characteristics, and interests of the indigenous peoples. This is possible with the cooperation of different participants, especially of the indigenous peoples themselves, as long as the national or international cooperant shows a corresponding openness. These studies must have in mind all kind of knowledge in order for the Mayan people, or any other indigenous people, to have at their disposal all the means necessary to respond to the political, economic, and school education situation, and all that is relevant for the construction of the multinational State.

A nagging concern is how the intellectual rights of the knowledge of indigenous peoples should be treated. This knowledge signifies an essential part of their survival and is displayed at present in any given circumstance and



condition without the corresponding protection. The established norms do not protect the knowledge of the indigenous peoples, and it is looted by different actors, which in many cases are alien to the communities and peoples. Also, it is worth mentioning that the study practice that utilizes the Mayas as simple informants is still in use, and the real holders of the Mayan ancestral knowledge are little merited for the importance and transcendence of their contribution.

The experience of the Monitoring Committee in this first phase of the study brought about the identification of themes that are little treated in studies, especially when they are planned and executed without the express participation of instances of the indigenous peoples themselves. This brings up questions, such as: who decides what to study, why to study, and what benefits can be brought to the Mayan people, etc.

Next, we present extracts from the final part of *El Encantamiento de la Realidad* (*The enchantment of reality*) (Dirección General de Educación Bilingüe (DIGEBI) e Instituto de Lingüística y Educación, 2007, pp. 262–266), which contain, among others, some conclusions reached by the principal researcher, as follows: Mesoamerican cultural structures underlie each of the studied social groups, and these condition the social practices and the production of knowledge, which is demonstrated in every moment of the events of everyday life.

Socio-cultural differences and similarities exist between different groups, the former being the result of the specific conditions of their ecological environment, the socio-cultural history, and the political processes experienced by each group. The similarities are a result of the inclusion of these groups in the Mesoamerican and Mayan civilizational matrix. In order to think about the Mayan knowledge, it is necessary to enter the rhythm of the practices of persons. Thus we find that much of the traditional knowledge is grasped in a sensorial manner, by taste, smell, and all the senses.

The urgencies of survival are putting out the possibilities of prevailing socio-culturally, and this could mark another limit of the pattern of strategic suitability. There are very few mediums communicating words and feelings connected to the big interests of the Mayan people, who possess founding stories of immense symbolic potential, see signs and warnings of the future everywhere, and use profound and common knowledge in different areas.

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## Chapter 4

# PARTICIPATION OF THE INDIGENOUS PEOPLES IN THE APPLIED RESEARCH WORK ON INTERCULTURAL BILINGUAL EDUCATION IN PERU

María Cortez Mondragón

*"In the past I didn't think about asking my grandparents, I wasn't interested, but now I want to ask more... I want to do more interviews."*

(Celestino Panduro Barbarán, researcher and representative of the Shipibo-Pano people)



## Summary

The Greater National University of San Marcos, Lima-Peru (UNMSM), through the Research Institute of Applied Linguistics (CILA) of the Faculty of Arts and Humanities, is the provider of the component of Applied Research on Intercultural Bilingual Education within the framework of the EIBAMAZ project that is carried out in the Ucayali region (Coronel Portillo and Atalaya provinces), where the indigenous Ashaninka, Shipibo, and Yine people live. The research is performed following two thematic lines of research: 1) Territory, history, and culture, and 2) Skills and learning processes of Ashaninka, Shipibo, and Yine children in the context of their language and culture.

A relevant and novel aspect of the work is that it corresponds to the methodology used to develop the research process. Consequently, the process has led conceptually to a dialectical relationship between traditional wisdom and the academic world, which is not possible without the involvement and contribution of the participants themselves; indigenous wise old men and women who support the training of the indigenous representatives. This enables an exchange of information that is realized at different levels of the project's activities. In this sense, the participation of both the communities and its organizations is the central axis driving the process described in this document.

## Acknowledgments

We would like to thank especially our *indigenous representatives*<sup>1</sup>, the coauthors of the results of this project, who we call *researchers in training*, since it is thanks to their participation and effort that this research and model has been implemented successfully; the *indigenous contact persons*, leaders who have promoted our activities within their organizations and in the spaces from which they participate; the *research assistants*, professionals or graduates, particularly at the Greater National University of San Marcos, Lima-Peru (UNMSM) who have taken part, in particular, in the field work carried out by the indigenous representatives.

We would like to extend our appreciation to the people responsible for the two lines of research and to those working in different institutions, given that they, as specialists in the Amazonian cause that brings us together, have made a valuable contribution to the project. Moreover, they have established the bases for the dialogue with the academic world in such a manner that our methodology and the results of this effort stand out and place emphasis on an intergenerational and intercultural dialogue.

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<sup>1</sup> 18 representatives participated in the project: 8 for the Shipibo, 4 for the Yine, and 4 for the Ashaninka people. Their names are included in the appendix.

## Chapter 4

The development of this project has been strengthened also thanks to the effective attention and participation of the leaders of the regional organization AIDSESEP-UCAYALI (ORAU); the teachers and students that have taken part in our workshops, both of the Yarinacocha Bilingual Pedagogic Institute and the National Intercultural University of the Amazon (UNIA).

Finally, this project has been enriched by the constant coordination with the professional representatives of regional and Peruvian UNICEF, the representatives of the regional government of Ucayali (GOREU), and the indigenous and non-indigenous colleagues that have worked on other components of the project.

# 1 Introduction

In Peru, the EIBAMAZ project is carried out in the Ucayali region. The third component is implemented under the responsibility of an interdisciplinary research group put together by the Research Institute of Applied Linguistics (CILA) of the The Greater National University of San Marcos (UNMSM), the institution responsible for the design, proposition and execution of research programs and strategies that serve as a base to carry out activities of recognition, application and development of indigenous knowledge and wisdom. In addition, the University reinforces an applied research proposal for pertinent Intercultural Bilingual Education (IBE) aimed at three Amazonian indigenous peoples: Ashaninka, Yine, and the Shipibo, the population of which varies, as does their relation with Western culture.

In order to carry out each of the proposed activities, UNMSM's CILA has designed a methodological and action strategy. Its central theme revolves around sharing the responsibilities of its execution with the participants directly involved, that is, the indigenous peoples, who constitute one of the most important counterparts of each of our activities.

This strategy that summons the different parties to a dialogue between *traditional knowledge and the academic world* allows us to create research processes with an essentially participative character. The objective of these processes is, firstly, to understand indigenous wisdom and traditional knowledge, and, secondly, to develop regional and local human research resources, indigenous ones in particular. Furthermore, the aim is that the generated knowledge leads to products applied to the improvement of educational activities directed towards the indigenous peoples, given. With the input of the people, it is hoped that the research component, in particular, will contribute to the development of Intercultural Bilingual Education teacher training and the production of educational material.

The research process was initiated with the elaboration of the *Sociolinguistic and Socio-educational Diagnosis of Intercultural Bilingual Education in Ucayali*, which has served as a foundation for pointing out both the principal educational needs to be addressed through IBE and the most evident limitations that this will face and must overcome.

The next phase saw the launching of a study which, first of all, examines and recognizes the physical spaces and the kind of relationship the actors have with these spaces, how the spaces are represented in the formation of their values, spirituality, and identity, and the processes that have been car-



ried out within these spaces. The study has also looked at how changes have occurred in these spaces and at the various processes influenced by Western culture. Second, and based on these processes, emphasis is given to the development processes of children and the form in which their own culture continues modeling each person. In addition, the study contemplates the changes that are produced within these processes or phases. The research is pursued according to two lines of inquiry:

Line 1: *Territory, History and Culture*, developed focusing on four specific objectives: a) Report the knowledge of the involved people in connection with their territory through the respective toponymy; b) Become acquainted with the history of the Ashaninka, Shipibo, and Yine people, living in the Ucayali region, through oral tradition and testimonies; c) Explain the Ashaninka, Shipibo, and Yine people's concept of the origin of the world or universe and the presence of them in their lives; d) Explain the antroponymic denomination system of the Ashaninka, Shipibo, and Yine people in order to contribute to the affirmation of their identity.

These objectives aspire to: a) Reinforce the defense of the indigenous territory and territorial identity, b) Develop the identity of an indigenous individual, based on knowledge of his or her antroponymic system, and c) Strengthen the history as perceived by the Amazonian peoples themselves, a possibility that is promoted by the indigenous organizations and their intellectuals.

We propose to answer mainly the following questions: Which are the spaces that the indigenous peoples Yine, Ashaninka, and Shipibo occupy and in what way is this relation evident at the level of denomination of this space? What is the significance of this space to them in the recognition of their own history and identity as an indigenous community?

Line 2: *Skills and learning processes of Ashaninka, Shipibo, and Yine children in the context of their language and culture*; in which we wish to bring up the necessity to develop the recording and interpretation of these processes, with the aim of contributing to the comprehension of an indigenous education system that must be urgently taken into consideration in IBE. To serve this purpose, this line of research is interrelated with the other components of the EIBAMAZ project. From this perspective, a cultural and linguistic registry is being developed on the specific aspects of the upbringing and learning of indigenous children in pre-school ages, in the case of the involved people.

What is more, we set out to develop educational proposals on the basis of systemization of the data and an interdisciplinary theoretical framework that

comprehends indigenous education within each of the involved peoples. The proposals seek to answer the following questions: a) Which are the typical skills and knowledge of the indigenous peoples' children? b) How do these children learn? c) What do they learn from a very early age in their home with their family, in their first years of infancy? Moreover, how does the school system take this knowledge into account? How much is known of this learning and teaching model? Does a model of learning and teaching typical to the indigenous culture exist?

## 2 The sociopolitical context of IBE

Peru has a great diversity of peoples contributing to its richness as a country. These peoples represent a variety of languages and cultures, have intimate links to the environment, and possess a worldview and spirituality unique to themselves. The interaction between these indigenous cultures and, above all, the relations and interaction with Western culture, has, during the last decades, motivated us to view these spaces in a different manner and to try out new theoretical and practical models in order to treat the different subject matters within these spaces.

According to the last national census (1993), the Peruvian population stands at 22.639.443, of which an estimated 30% is of indigenous origin (predominantly Amazonian and Andean rural peoples). The number of indigenous peoples<sup>2</sup> established for the Amazon region is 42. However, the number of languages may vary, but "the number of the indigenous languages in today's Peru is unlikely to exceed 44, counting both Andean and Amazonian languages currently spoken" (Solís: 2002, p. 19, translated from Spanish).

A debate has continued for more than 30 years on the type of education that should be implemented for the population group that speaks an indigenous language as their mother tongue and represents a culture different to the hegemonic Western one. This discussion has not ceased, given that official education has yet to respond to the challenge of recognizing and/or developing models embracing cultural and linguistic diversity.

IBE, or BIE, is a proposal to which substantial changes have been suggested since, especially in the Peruvian Amazonian region, the Summer Insti-

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<sup>2</sup> We do not compare language to people, since there exist indigenous people that do not employ only one language. Yet, culturally speaking, they are members of one indigenous people (ILO Convention 169).

tute of Linguistics, acting as a partner of the Peruvian government<sup>3</sup>, had taken on the implementation of programs directed towards the indigenous Amazonian peoples, the methodology of which put emphasis on a transition pedagogic model "in favor of" the Spanish language and Western culture. The indigenous languages were utilized to write and translate contents and values (especially religious) of the hegemonic culture, without taking into account the indigenous cultures and working against a special development proposal that incorporated the traditional wisdom and knowledge of the people. This model devalued the indigenous peoples, did not recognize their spaces, and distanced them from the application of a genuinely intercultural model that would promote a fair dialogue and appropriate, quality education.

In 1972 the institutionalization process of IBE began with the *National Policy of Bilingual Education*, promulgated by the government of Juan Velasco Alvarado. It was during the first government of Alan García (1985-1990) that the first *Department for Bilingual Education* was created in the Ministry of Education. The Bilingual Education (1989), which included the notion of interculturality as its guiding principle for the whole education system, was an aspect that had not been considered before. In 1990 this department was eliminated by President Alberto Fujimori who, during his second term (1995-2000), created the *Department for Bilingual Intercultural Education*. However, this was developed especially with the aid of NGOs and was not adopted as a long term policy (Montoya, R. 2001).

In 2000, with the transitional government of President Valentín Paniagua, the *National Department for Intercultural Bilingual Education* (DINEBI) was created. It operated until the year 2007 when it was incorporated into the *National Department for Rural Education*, turning it into *The Department for Intercultural Bilingual Rural Education* (DINEIBIR).

One of the most relevant aspects that should be considered here is the fact that the state has not been able to establish programs, especially in the training of teachers, in their recognition as valid partners, and in the preparation of culturally pertinent materials that would promote a true Intercultural Bilingual Education (IBE).

In the history of IBE, however, we can find efforts that have sought to change an unequal situation and promote quality education and recognition and development of the indigenous culture with the participation of, above all, the actual indigenous peoples involved and their organizations. One of these efforts is being carried out in the Amazon region by the Intercultural Bilingual

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<sup>3</sup> Under agreement.

Education Teacher Training Program in the Peruvian Amazon Area (FORMABIAP) that works in close partnership with the Higher Public Institute Loreto and the Interethnic Association for Development of the Peruvian Jungle (AIDSESP), one of the most important and representative indigenous organizations.

IBE obtained more legal backing from the moment the Peruvian government signed laws such as:

- ILO Convention 169.
- Peruvian Constitution (1993), which, in Article 2, Numeral 19, provides the express recognition of the pluri-ethnic and cultural character of the Nation, and in Article 48 establishes that: «The law states that the official languages are Spanish and, in those regions where they predominate, also Quechua, and Aimara and other aboriginal languages.»
- General Law of Education, passed by Law N° 28044.
- The Law of Intercultural Bilingual Education, passed by Law N° 27818, published on August 16, 2002.
- National Policy on Languages and Cultures in Education (Lima, March, 2002), a framework for the development of pedagogic IBE activities, within which the use of languages and cultures is regulated and this diversity is recognized as a richness.
- National Draft Law on Languages, which seeks to complete the legislation in connection with languages spoken in our country.
- Law N° 28106: Law of Recognition, Preservation, Promotion and Diffusion of Native Languages.
- National Program on Languages and Cultures in Education. (2002), an important document drawn up by DINEBI.

## 2.1 Ucayali region

Given that the activities of the EIBAMAZ project are carried out in one of the regions most representative of the diversity of the Peruvian Amazon area, namely Ucayali region, it is important to take into account how the educational subject is treated in the region, and, at the same time, what role the indigenous peoples play in the education system.

Ucayali region was created on June 18, 1980, by virtue of Law N° 23416, promulgated on June 1, 1982. This region is located in the central eastern part of the Peruvian territory, limited in the east by the state of Acre, which be-

longs to the Republic of Brazil; in the west by the regions of Pasco and Huanuco; in the north by the region of Loreto; and in the south by the regions of Madre de Dios, Cusco, and Junín.<sup>4</sup>

Tables 1 and 2 (see appendixes) offer information on the diverse provinces of Ucayali. The tables stress the existing difference of population density between the predominantly rural provinces (Purús and Atalaya) and those of Coronel Portillo and Padre Abad. In the case of the two former, the district of Purús has a population density of 0.23, whereas the district of Yurúa in the Atalaya<sup>5</sup> province has a population density of 0.11. As this example shows, there are great extensions of inhabited territory, whereas in the case of Coronel Portillo, this is not the case, nor in the district of Yarinacocha<sup>6</sup>, where the population density reaches 291.72, which means over 200 habitants per square kilometer. It must be bore in mind that Yarinacocha occupies an almost urban space, and this allows us to clearly see the process of depopulation of rural areas and the migratory phenomenon that is produced in this region. (See tables 1 and 2 in the appendixes)

### 2.2 Regional Education Project for Ucayali for 2005–2012 (PER-U)

The Regional Government of Ucayali has led the development – together with governmental and non-governmental institutions – of the *Regional Education Project for Ucayali for 2005–2012*, which is maintained in a political and legal framework that produced agreements, tendencies, and/or relevant criteria<sup>7</sup>.

Based on the *World Declaration on Education for All* and on the many international meetings that were organized around education, the project ratified the following objectives: a) Guarantee that all children have access to a free, obligatory and equal primary education, b) Guarantee that young people and adults have access to an equal learning and to a preparation for active life, c) Eradicate all forms of gender inequality in primary and secondary education, d) Improve the quality of education, especially in reading, writing, arithmetic and key practical skills, among others.

Thus, within the framework of the various international and regional forums in which Peru has participated, a collection of commitments has been

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<sup>4</sup> (PER-U 2005–2012, Regional Education Project for Ucayali for 2005-2012).

<sup>5</sup> Purús and Atalaya are zones where there is a high concentration of indigenous people.

<sup>6</sup> Yarinacocha accommodates a numerous quantity of indigenous people, especially of Shipibo origin, that have migrated from their communities.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

made in connection with education, ones that can be summed up in the six objectives of the *“Plan on Education for All”*: a) expansion of pre-scholar education, b) universal primary education, c) expansion of secondary education, d) education for the adult population, e) gender equality, f) quality teaching in educational systems.

The acquired commitments are reflected in the NATIONAL AGREEMENT, signed in June, 2002, which establishes as its objective: *“Universal access to a free, quality public education which promotes and defends culture and sport”*.

The National Plan for the Infancy and Adolescence 2002–2010 (PNIA), emphasizes in the PER: a) The Strategic Objective N.º 2: «Offer quality primary education to all children between the ages 6 to 11» and the Strategic Objective N.º 3: «Obtain quality secondary education».

All of the above mentioned served as a basis for the establishment of the Agreed Regional Development Plan 2005–2006 for Ucayali, which states to «Improve the quality of education in Ucayali region» and establishes the Guidelines of Regional Policy for Curricular Diversification, a document in which specific orientations are provided in order to diversify the curriculum at the level of Ucayali region. These orientations will permit the development of curricular projects by educational institutions<sup>8</sup>.

On the other hand, the PER-U 2005–2012 is working on the legal foundation established in the Constitution, the General Law on Education, 2004, etc., which grants the support needed to work in coordination with the UGELs.<sup>9</sup> Likewise, this document<sup>10</sup> advises that

*«it is estimated that in the future, the potential demand for education will be increasingly concentrated at the secondary level, in general, with a greater emphasis on the superior level, with a certain stagnation at the primary level, and a reduction at the initial level».*

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<sup>8</sup> (PER-U, p 11).

<sup>9</sup> Local Education Fostering Units (Unidades de Gestión Educativa Locales).

<sup>10</sup> PER-U: p 15.

## 2.3 Intercultural Bilingual Education in Ucayali

Having said this, it is important to mention that in the PER-U no specific mention is made on the problems of the indigenous population of the region, despite the great diversity found in this zone<sup>11</sup>.

This leads us to identify unsolved problems, particularly due to the lack of attention received from the part of the state. Despite the efforts of the participants, their organizations, and the other institutions joined in this effort, a point has not been reached where the system would recognize this diversity as an advantage and an important quality – essentially as a richness. The “official” education is yet to assume a curriculum that would count as true IBE for the tribal peoples in regions, recognized as indigenous ones, and also in the urban spaces where there is an indigenous population<sup>12</sup> present.

Another evident problem is posed by the training of qualified human resources, *i.e.* teachers who would respond to the application of new models (new curriculums), who would adopt indigenous language and culture as an intrinsic and important value, and who would be prepared to come to terms with bilingual teaching, where interculturality means a more desirable interaction with the other culture<sup>13</sup>.

An important fact that should be noted is the involvement of the indigenous organizations in the education of their peoples and in presenting a proposal to create their own education for indigenous peoples which would function at all the educational levels. Thus, they are demanding equal treatment with respect to diversity and the exercising of their rights.

The ORAU (Regional Organization AIDSEP of Ucayali) holds that Intercultural Bilingual Education (IBE) represents a right won by the indigenous people through which, in addition to using their mother tongue, their cultures are proactively respected and valued. Consequently, if it is adopted effectively,

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<sup>11</sup> It is known that on the 18th of July, a meeting was arranged, where different institutions were convened, among them UNICEF-EIBAMAZ project (two components that are carried out in the region), in which the development of the PER of the region was discussed. Probably aspects more closely related to tribal peoples will be included in this development. The participation of the Regional Government (GOREU) is recognized with great satisfaction, and so is their concern for giving priority to serving indigenous children, focusing on two fundamental aspects: education and health.

<sup>12</sup> The indigenous population has often moved from its ancestral spaces, not only by its own account, but also forced by incursions of the state or other populations (extracting companies) upon their territories; by climactic phenomena and plagues, as well as forced migrations and the access to new life styles, among others.

<sup>13</sup> Line of research 2 report.

changes will be achieved in the improvement of the quality of life in the indigenous communities of Ucayali.<sup>14</sup>

The ORAU elevates the importance of IBE to a political level, to function as the primary strategy for the reinforcement of the indigenous people. In addition to the intercultural and multilingual axis, this will incorporate the environmental component that has to do with the inhabited spaces and with everything that happens around this component.<sup>15</sup>

### 3 The Indigenous Peoples involved in the work<sup>16</sup>

As was mentioned in the beginning, the research, in its second (II) phase, was carried out with the Ashaninka, Shipibo, and Yine people. The two former belong to the Arawak linguistic family, whereas Shipibo is part of the Pano linguistic family. According to the INEI 1993 census, the most notable population of the people at national level is that of Ashaninka-Asheninka (52.461), Shipibo being the second most numerous (20.178), and Yine (2.553) the smallest population. However, in the project's region it is the Shipibo people who constitute the largest population.

The people are also present in other regions: the Yine people is present in the regions of Madre de Dios (river Manu), Loreto (river Cushibatay), and Cusco; the Ashaninka in the regions of Huánuco, Pasco, and Junín; and the Shipibo in the Loreto and Huánuco regions.

These people acquire and learn their indigenous language in their home and community. However, in various communities it has been noted that Spanish is displacing indigenous languages. In addition, the teaching of the indigenous language in school is very deficient: a great majority of the teachers do not have adequate command of IBE, and the educational system does not meet the needs and expectations of the indigenous peoples.

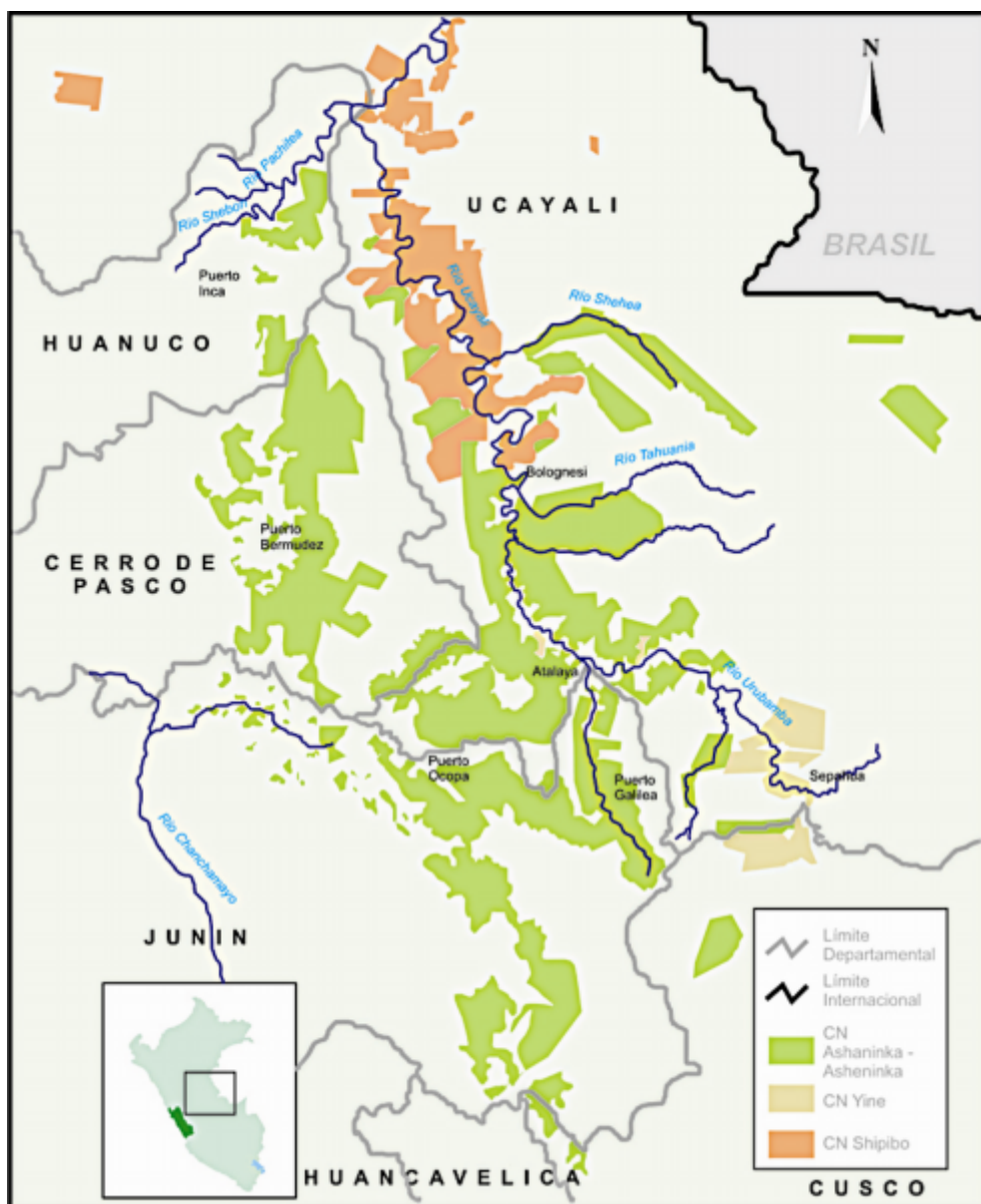
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<sup>14</sup> EBI-ORAU agenda.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibíd.*

<sup>16</sup> Data based on: Life of research 2 report.





### 3.1 Criteria of selection of communities

The criteria of selection of native communities to be visited responds to the geographic reality (river basins), antiquity, traditionalism, presence of wise old men and women, proximity to major population centers, as well as rele-

vant social, linguistic (monolingualism, contact with Spanish, etc.) and demographic aspects of each of the peoples with which the research is done.

In the case of the Asháninka people, the selection of communities was based on observation of an increased and decreased use of their own indigenous language, as well as distance from the capital city, higher number of children<sup>17</sup>, and its traditionalism<sup>18</sup>. Table 3 (see appendix) offers information on the selected communities.

In the case of the Shipibo people, the work was concentrated on the provinces of Coronel Portillo and Atalaya. Two types of population were selected: native rural community and urban population. The native rural communities represent the three river basins: high, middle and low Ucayali. The urban population consulted, in turn, is represented by two native urban communities (close by to the centre of Pucallpa, Bena Jema, and San Juan) and one human settlement. Bena Jema and San Juan (km. 13) are populated areas or "urban communities", inhabited by migrant Shipibo people who govern their political and social structure under the same organization as the native communities. However, in the human settlement visited, Roberto Ruiz Vargas, live Shipibo people who remain outside the political and social structure of the community. Table 4 (see appendix) shows the selected zones and communities.

In the case of the Yine people, the communities were also chosen by representatives of these people. The selected communities are Nueva Italia, Rima, Bufeo Pozo, Santa Rosa de Sepahua, and Miaría (see table 5 in appendix).

## 4 Conceptual framework approach: towards the construction or discovery of a theory

The emphasis of the research has been laid on field work in which we have tried to apply a new model of qualitative research. The participative research highlights the fact that data is collected on site, in natural media: asking, visiting, watching, listening, exchanging, and also through workshops, work groups, work breakfasts, etc. The participants of the project are the most important subjects of the research. The work is realized in close contact with them, and the collecting of data and its reflection is shared with them.

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<sup>17</sup> Base for the development of the subject matter of line of research 2.

<sup>18</sup> Base for the development of the subject matter of line of research 1.

The conceptual aspects, which will be detailed below, revolve around a notion of a dialogue that is essential for us. Furthermore, they are related to the fact that the research as theory and methodology is put in practice and action with the aim of developing new concepts stemming from the project's emphasis on what we call the construction of a "*dialogue between traditional wisdom and the academic world*". This dialogue seeks to recognize the validity of the knowledge and science possessed by the wise old men and women, ensuring that the research results comply with the following objectives or goals:

- The creation of new concepts and the necessity to go in depth into the participative research approach.
- The collection of data, generating an attitude towards it by those who submit the data and those who receive it.
- The systemization of the data with those who give it and those who gather it.
- The returning of that data to those who provide it and to those who receive it, accomplishing a responsibility in respect to its systemization and socialization intra or extra individual/community/people.
- The control of the property of the data and the ends to which it has been collected through a sociopolitical commitment in respect to the positioning, diffusion and/or utilization of the data.

Part of the conduct of those who participate in this dialogue would be not to seize – not to privatize – this knowledge, given that the academic world often communicates as an individual, whereas the wise old men and women exchange information collectively within the community. Hence, it is necessary to respect the shared, communal nature of this knowledge in a relationship based on dialogue. On the other hand, it must be bore in mind that if new knowledge is generated, we should stop thinking about shared property: the responsibility also lies in recognizing and adopting that which is new, that which is shared.<sup>19</sup>

It is important to bear in mind that *traditional wisdom* is represented by the wise old men and women of the communities and not only by the elderly, who jealously preserve their knowledge, history, worldview, models of upbringing, recognition of what their spaces, language, culture, family systems and parenthood mean, their mode of teaching their people and how they and

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<sup>19</sup> Conversation with Gustavo Solis.

the others learn. From keepers they will transform into trainers – those who teach – since this is the role their culture, group, and community has assigned to them. Lastly, it should be considered as an important and transcendent fact that they should have the responsibility of evaluating the way in which we have come to terms with that data, the collecting process itself, and the generation of new data that will constitute the dynamic of the construction of new traditional wisdom and knowledge:

*«...when one has a notion [of the dreams], one can heal others, in addition to the observation and spiritual learning. The wise old man or woman has special skills, and he or she teaches you, shows you...this is in the vision, it is in the spiritual world, but it is also physical.»<sup>20</sup>*

The proposed dialogue centers on the participation that has been given to the *young indigenous persons*, men and women, who live or do not live within their communities and who participate as *indigenous representatives in training*. They have approached these tribal elders in order to collect the experiences and wisdom these persons possess in connection with their people. If the representatives are students who have had previous learning experiences in an institute or a university, their participation and relationship with the wise old men and women has allowed them to contrast what they learn in the classroom and what they learn outside it.

In addition, the dialogue revolves around the relationship between the wise old men and women and the research assistants and professional university specialists, who might have also become aware of this dialogue and of the fact that the concepts used as valid for the research of these peoples – from their academic training, based solely on Western principles – are more different than expected if they are analyzed from the point of view of the culture itself. This convergence is most valuable since it has resulted in the opportunity to make this contrast within the framework of this exchange of information between the tribal elders and the academic world. The results are new concepts and new knowledge starting from a dynamic, not static, relation.

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<sup>20</sup> Ely Sanchez, an indigenous wise old man of the Shipibo people.

#### 4.1 Some basic definitions

1. *Involvement of the participants*: the members of indigenous peoples participate in the design and/or consultation of the proposal, and the following activities concerning their training and the participation of their communities are coordinated. This definition is coherent with articles 5, 6, and 7 of the ILO Convention 169<sup>21</sup>.
2. *Participative research*. In the above mentioned framework, it is understood that in each research stage the participation of the members of the indigenous Shipibo, Ashaninka, and Yine people is assured.
3. *Wise old men and women*: men and women of the indigenous communities who preserve their knowledge, wisdom, cultural worldview, and language.
4. *Indigenous delegates, researchers in training*: young people, men and women, who form part of an indigenous community and who might or might not be students in a pedagogic institute or university.
5. *Indigenous contact person*: indigenous man or woman, designated by his or her indigenous organization to become involved in the project, support and reinforce it, and interconnect the project's activities with those of his or her organization.
6. *Research assistant*: university graduate with a bachelor's degree or other specialist in some aspects of the project: education, linguistics, psychology, anthropology, etc.
7. *Worldview*: model of the world or the universe of the members of a society. This model includes suppositions about the origin and basic constitution of reality as a whole and of its constituent parts, which help to explain, interpret, and apply it in social practice.

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<sup>21</sup> Art. 5) subsection c): "Policies aimed at mitigating the difficulties experienced by these peoples in facing new conditions of life and work shall be adopted, with the participation and co-operation of the peoples affected."

Art. 6) subsection a): "Policies aimed at mitigating the difficulties experienced by these peoples in facing new conditions of life and work shall be adopted, with the participation and co-operation of the peoples affected."

Art. 7) subsection 1. "The peoples concerned shall have the right to decide their own priorities for the process of development as it affects their lives, beliefs, institutions and spiritual well-being and the lands they occupy or otherwise use, and to exercise control, to the extent possible, over their own economic, social and cultural development. In addition, they shall participate in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of plans and programs for national and regional development which may affect them directly." Subsection 2. "The improvement of the conditions of life and work and levels of health and education of the peoples concerned, with their participation and co-operation, shall be a matter of priority in plans for the overall economic development of areas they inhabit (...)."

8. *History*: possibility to analyze the perspective of the Amazonian peoples themselves, make explicit representations on the facts that collective memory keeps and on the significance attributed to these, recovering the forms of construction of a self-image of the people in different times.
9. *Learning*: as a cognitive process, it is defined not only as relatively permanent changes in a person's behavior as a consequence of the person's practice or experience, but also as changes and internal events (cognitive restructuring, comprehension, etc.) that can be inferred from the observation of the behavior. It is very important to consider that the cognitive dimension of learning does not exclude the emotional and social aspect, since we also adopt attitudes, values, and beliefs through culture (upbringing, education, art, and literature norms). Understanding how one learns, that is, identifying the learning mechanism, allows us to consider important aspects of the dynamic of development and make better decisions in relation to pedagogic activities.
10. *Indigenous peoples*: According to what the ILO Convention 169 stipulates<sup>22</sup>.
11. Culture<sup>23</sup>: «(...) is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, customs, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of the society».<sup>24</sup> All reality is cultural reality, and all human experience is left culturally impregnated, given that each individual interprets experiences upon the basis of the principles received in his or her own socialization. Furthermore, all of his or her valuations are relative to the cultural pattern/standard from which they rise. Culture is not only the aspect of a cultural pattern, it is the total sum of learned conduct features that are manifested and shared by the members of a society<sup>25</sup>.

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<sup>22</sup> Art. 1: a) Tribal peoples in independent countries whose social, cultural and economic conditions distinguish them from other sections of the national community, and whose status is regulated wholly or partially by their own customs or traditions or by special laws or regulations

b) Peoples in independent countries who are regarded as indigenous on account of their descent from the populations which inhabited the country, or a geographical region to which the country belongs, at the time of conquest or colonization or the establishment of present State boundaries and who, irrespective of their legal status, retain some or all of their own social, economic, cultural and political institutions.

<sup>23</sup> Rummenhoeller, 2003.

<sup>24</sup> E.B.Taylor :1871. Cited in Smith (2008).

<sup>25</sup> Montagne: cited in the line of research 2 report.

Given that the research is carried out in a space featuring linguistic, educational, and cultural diversity, we have tried to stress that the proposed dialogue demands that no criteria be imposed upon it. Rather the opposite; the pedagogic, linguistic, cultural, political, and economic practice must be respected and observed in order to explain and analyze the causes of the events taking place in these spaces, and how each of these influence individual and collective development.

## 5 Methodology

The research component of the EIBAMAZ project considers *the training of local human research resources* in a unique way. This objective is in accordance with a basic proposal: the participative methodology, which is put forward to strengthen the training of both members of the indigenous Ashaninka, Yine, and Shipibo peoples, as well as the professionals who work alongside the development of the research, encouraging the dialogue between different wisdom, as well as the exchange and generation of new knowledge.

The methodological strategy designed for the project has been resting on three pillars<sup>26</sup>:

- Notification of the project to the principal participants at regional level (students, teachers, communities, and indigenous organizations) in order to achieve synergies (through dialogue, exchange, and inter-learning) between the academic world and the wisdom of the involved Amazonian peoples.
- Establishment of concurrent levels of participation: level of indigenous organizations (indigenous contact persons and proposed indigenous delegates-researchers); level of the communities (heads of community, assemblies, tribal elders, delegates recognized by the community, CILA's research assistants).
- Consented execution of an *investigation-action* process, which brought the indigenous delegates-researchers into the project and led to the participation of the parents and children of the communities selected for this research.

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<sup>26</sup> Line of research 2 report.

The specific development of the strategy has brought about the following principal events.

### 5.1 An initial consultation process: Modality – Workshop

The process was begun with the organization of a workshop in the city of Pucallpa, the main objective of which was to provide information about the academic proposal drawn up by CILA's team in coordination with EIBAMAZ-UNICEF's team, and to consult and register the opinions of the participants. The main goal was to: «*Promote a participative model of research for the improvement of the implementation of Intercultural Bilingual Education in Ucayali region*». The workshop brought together the following participants: The members of the communities, representatives of indigenous organizations, teachers and students of the Bilingual Pedagogic Institute of Yarinacocha (ISPB), as well as of the National Intercultural University of the Amazon (UNIA), representatives of the Regional Directors of Education for Ucayali (DREU); representatives of the Local Education Fostering Units (UGELs), representative of the Regional Government (GOREU), and those responsible for the components of the EIBAMAZ project, among others.

The consultation consisted of informing about: a) The lines of research and the subject matter corresponding to each line, b) The mode of intervention and involvement of the members of the Ashaninka, Shipibo, and Yine people: the election and participation of the indigenous delegates and indigenous contact persons, d) Selection of the spaces: communities where the research would be carried out, e) The exchange of information related to the research process: type of research, design of instruments, activities within the communities, inter-learning meetings, planning of activities, and time line.

The decision making was done at two levels: on the one hand, in group work in the workshops with the members of organizations, teachers, and students, and, on the other, in the communities themselves.

Group work: in the workshop, reflections and proposals were made on the aspects that should be decided:

1. Participation of the indigenous organizations: names of young men and women IBE students or members of the communities are proposed to hold the position of indigenous delegates, researchers in training.



2. Selection of the communities: proposal of criteria<sup>27</sup>.
3. Proposal of the indigenous contact persons, who work as a link between the indigenous organization, the regional administration of education or the UGEL, and CILA's team.

### *In the communities*

In the communities, the participation was carried out in different ways: a) ratification of the proposed delegates during the workshop, b) conformity of the communities to carry out the research: exchange of information between the research assistants and line coordinators, c) participation of the communities' wise old men and women as partners in the training of the indigenous delegates/researchers-in-training.

## **5.2 Work groups and visits to the communities**

After carrying out the previous phase of consultation and formation of groups (delegates, assistants, contact persons and coordination with the communities), the *modality of work groups* is utilized. These groups reflect on and analyze instruments – and the topic of discussion is what the process of research means – from the point of view of the academic world, as well as the process of exchanging information with the tribal elders of the communities, the methodology of field work activities, and, above all, the managing of instruments.

Field work was carried out by organizing visits to the communities, dialogues and open interviews, and, in some cases, structured ones (questionnaires; psychometric questions); immersion into the community, especially by the delegates who seek to get close to the wise old men and women of their communities, using their language, and, on many occasions, meeting again with traditional wisdom and knowledge that they were unaware of or had put aside. The presence of the indigenous delegates facilitated the entrance and the exchange between assistants and the communities' tribal elders, as well as with children, parents, and teachers, with whom also workshops and on-site meetings were organized.

An intercultural process that allowed deconstructing pre-established concepts was achieved through the systemization of, and reflection on, the col-

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<sup>27</sup> Seen in the previous paragraph.

lected data as well as the confirmation of that data based on the consultations with the wise old men and women and the exchange of information with the academic world. This led to the construction of categories of analysis based on the cultures and languages themselves. These include, for example: categories of learning levels; notion of education, phases of development, intergenerational relations, color, time, history, space, names, designation of spaces, and values.

## 6 Preliminary results of the research process

- It has generated systematic and up-to-date information on the traditional knowledge, values, and practices of the Ashaninka-Asheninka, Yine, and Shipibo peoples in two thematic lines of research: Line 1: Territory, history, and culture and Line 2: Skills and learning processes of indigenous children in the context of their culture and language.
- The indigenous delegates and the tribal elders have made it possible, through an effective dialogue and intra-learning with the research assistants, line coordinators, and those responsible for CILA, to have at their disposal material that will serve as support for rewriting history from within the Ashaninka, Shipibo, and Yine peoples, from the participants themselves, an aspect that has not been achieved before.
- Similarly, we now have abundant and important material on the subject related to the skills and learning processes of children pertaining to the these people: research instruments and data that can be utilized in educational materials and the design of curriculum proposals for these people.
- The training of young indigenous persons, men and women, has been strengthened in a significant way with the participation of the indigenous organizations.
- Recognition of the fact that it is essential that a research team can rely on the participation of the community and the key persons pertaining to it in the analysis of their own reality, understanding the scientific inquiry as an educative activity, a reconstruction of social memory, and a cultural affirmation.
- The training of human potential in the research will make it possible to formulate curriculum proposals along with pertinent and quality educational materials stemming from the results, configuring a relationship

between theory and coherent practice. This is done within the framework of intercultural education that stresses the recognition of indigenous cultures possessing a great wealth of knowledge and wisdom that has been constructed by them and of the fact that this constitutes a solid base of dynamic and intercultural exchange of information.

## 7 Some final conclusions

We wish to continue highlighting the process we have initiated and confirming that it is important to continue working around strengthening the methodological design, which has made possible the active involvement of the participants in different aspects:

### *The actions of the participants*

1. Of the indigenous delegates in their capacity as researchers-in-practice (young persons – indigenous men and women of the communities and/or in IBE training) for whom we are designing a more systematic training proposal.
2. Of the indigenous communities' wise old men and women, principal authors and/or inspectors of the collected research data.
3. Of the leaders of the communities and the indigenous organizations that have adopted the research and validated the methodology.
4. Of the indigenous professionals; the children of the communities; key person of the communities: teachers, promoters, parents.
5. Of principal non-indigenous persons as supporters of our actions.

### *The perspective of educational and political action*

1. The design and putting in practice of a participative methodology with a perspective to visualize/systematize an indigenous epistemology.
2. Participation and support in the development of the research and in the training of researchers, members of a multidisciplinary team, and of professionals with experience of the Amazon region.
3. Participation and initiation of the training of 18 indigenous researchers, who supported the research and the systemization of data, becoming involved with the tribal elders of their communities and coun-

ting with the support of the research assistants and UNMSM's researchers in their training, reinforcing the synergy between traditional wisdom and the academic world.

4. Promotion of the subject matter at the level of the media, the governmental instances such as the Regional Administration of Education – Ucayali; of the regional government (GOR-U) with the purpose of seeing policies favoring the tribal peoples, generated by these parties.
5. Participation of the indigenous organizations from the beginning of the design and the project process.
6. The introduction of a process that involves young people, men and women of the indigenous peoples, students and teachers at the UNIA and the ISPB, key persons of institutions such as GORE-U, DRE, UNICEF, NGO, etc.

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## Chapter 4

### Appendix 1: Research team

General coordinator

María Cortez

Persons responsible for institutions

Gustavo Solís

Rosario Quesada

Line coordinators

Rodolfo Garrafa (Line 1)

Alejandro Smith (Line 2)

Indigenous contact persons

Richer Sebastian (Ashaninka people)

Alejandro Bautista (Shipibo people)

Delia Torres (Yine people)

Indigenous delegates of the Ashaninka-Ashéninka people

Cali Calvario Vásquez

Aurelio Pacaya

Daniel Corionico Echari (Mañarini)

Carlos Capita Romano (Bajo Chencoreni)

Pascual Camaiteri (OAGP, collaborator)

Cleofás Quentori (OAGP, collaborator)

Indigenous delegates of the Shipibo people

Jésica Durán (Caco Macaya)

William Fernández (Amaquiría)

Nelson Martínez (Túpac Amaru)

Celestino Panduro (Junín Pablo)

Ibeth Sánchez (Callería)

Dany Chávez (Yarinacocha)

Néstor Paiva (Yarinacocha)

Indigenous delegates of the Yine people

Alex Sebastián (Miaría)

Marilyn Lima (Miaría)

Octavio López (Santa Rosa de Sepahua)

Segundo Sebastián (Bufeo Pozo)

Cecilia Torres (Nueva Italia de Rima)

Research assistants

Line 1

Karina Sullón (shipibo people)

Maggie Romaní (ashaninka people)

Victor Romero (yine people)

Line 2

Ana Janampa (ashaninka people)

Natalia Verástegui (shipibo people)

Carmen Núñez (yine people)

## Chapter 4

### Appendix 2: Tables 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5

Table N° 1

#### Area and population by provinces and districts – Ucayali

Province and district	Area (km <sup>2</sup> )	Percentage of area (%)	Population 2004	Percentage of population (%)	Population density 2004
Total	102.410.55	100.00	464.399	100.00	4.53
Coronel Portillo	6.815.86	35.95	345.233	74.34	9.38
Callería	10.937.62	10.69	228.706	49.25	20.91
Campo Verde	1.548.87	1.51	18.507	4.20	12.59
Iparía	9.624	9.40	13.292	2.86	1.38
Masisea	12.507.77	12.21	16.787	3.61	1.34
Yarinacocha	197.81	0.19	57.706	12.43	291.72
Nueva Requena	1.999.78	1.95	9.235	1.99	4.62
Atalaya	38.924.43	38.01	50.412	10.86	1.30
Raimondi	14.508.51	14.17	33.945	7.31	2.34
Sepahua	8.223.63	8.03	7.522	1.62	0.91
Tahuanía	7.016	6.85	7.918	1.70	1.13
Yurúa	9.175.58	8.96	1.027	0.22	0.11
Padre Abad	8.822	8.61	64.653	13.98	7.33
Padre Abad	4.663.66	4.55	39.423	8.49	8.45
Irazola	2.006.98	1.96	19.452	4.19	9.69
Curimana	2.151.86	2.10	5.778	1.24	2.69
Purús	17.847.76	17.43	4.101	0.88	0.23
Purús	17.847.76	17.43	4.101	0.88	0.23

Source: National Institute of Statistics and Information (PER-U 2005-2012)

Table N° 2

## Indigenous population in Ucayali region by people, sex and age group

N°	INDIGENOUS PEOPLE	INDIGENOUS POPULATION			INDIGENOUS POPULATION BY AGE GROUPS		
		TOTAL	MEN	WOMEN	0-4 YEARS	15-39	40-64
01	AMAHUAKA	172	88	84	77	58	28
02	ASHANINKA-ASHENINKA <sup>28</sup>	6.857	3.555	3302	3.481	2.555	760
		3.823	1.971	1.852	1.975	1.453	385
03	KAKATAIBO KASHIBO	1.356	735	621	590	584	161
04	KASHINAHUA (JONI KOIN)	909	470	439	469	313	116
05	KUKAMA - KUKAMILLA	1.283	655	628	667	435	156
06	MADIJA (KULINA )	300	145	155	128	125	42
07	YINE (PIRO)	1.708	906	802	940	585	157
08	SHARANAHUA	438	211	227	193	180	62
09	SHIIBO KONIBO	18.237	9.449	8.788	8.914	6.668	2.334
10	YAMINAHUA	324	180	144	160	127	36
11	NOT SPECIFIED <sup>29</sup>	1.023	548	475	508	385	112
TOTAL		36.430	18.913	17.517	18.102	13.464	4.340

Source: INEI-CENSO 1993. Personal compilation.

<sup>28</sup> Ashaninka-Asheninka form part of the same indigenous people. There is no clarity between one or the other auto-denomination even by zones.

<sup>29</sup> The data of the above mentioned table show us 10 indigenous people. The Mastanahua and Chaninahua people are not mentioned, the population of which are perhaps considered in "NOT SPECIFIED".



## Chapter 4

Table N° 3

SELECTED ASHANINKA-ASHENINKA COMMUNITIES			
RIVER BASIN / ZONE	NATIVE COMMUNITY	DISTRICT	INDIGENOUS ORGANIZATION
Bajo Ucayali	Jatitsa	Tahuanía	OIRA (Indigenous organization of Atalaya region)
	Puerto Esperanza	Raymondi	FECONAPA (Federation of native communities of Atalaya province)
Alto Ucayali (river Unini)	Unini Cascada		OIRA (Indigenous organization of Atalaya region)
Alto Ucayali (Lagarto ravine)	Lagarto Millar		
Gran Pajonal	Mañarini	Obenteni	OAGP (Asháninka organization of Gran Pajonal)
	Bajo Chenkoreni		

Table N° 4

SELECTED SHIPIBO COMMUNITIES					
RIVER BASIN	SUB-BASIN	NATIVE COMMUNITY/ H.S. <sup>30</sup>	DISTRICT	PROVINCE	FEDERATION
Alto Ucayali	Tipishca de Amaquirá	Amaquirá	Iparia	Coronel Portillo	FECONADIP
	Caco Macaya	Caco Macaya	Iparia	Coronel Portillo	FECONADIP
	R. Cumaría	Tupac Amaru	Tahuanía	Atalaya	ORDECONADIT
Medio Ucayali	R. Tamaya	Junin Pablo	Masisea	Coronel Portillo	ORDIM
Bajo Ucayali	Callería	Callería	Callería	Coronel Portillo	FECONAU
	---	H.S. San Juan (Km. 13)	Yarinacocha	Coronel Portillo	FECONAU
	---	H.S. Bena Jema	Yarinacocha	Coronel Portillo	FECONAU
	Lago Yarina-cocha	H.S. Roberto Ruiz Vargas	Yarinacocha	Coronel Portillo	---

Table N° 5

SELECTED YINE COMMUNITIES		
RIVER BASIN	NATIVE COMMUNITY	INDIGENOUS ORGANIZATION
Urubamba	Nueva Italia Rima	OYPA
Urubamba	Bufeo Pozo	FECONAYY
Urubamba	Santa Rosa de Sepahua	FECONAYY
Urubamba	Miaría	- -

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<sup>30</sup> Human settlements (HS).



Chapter 5

# **PRODUCTIVE EDUCATION AND INDIGENOUS CURRICULA IN THE BOLIVIAN AMAZONIAN REGION**

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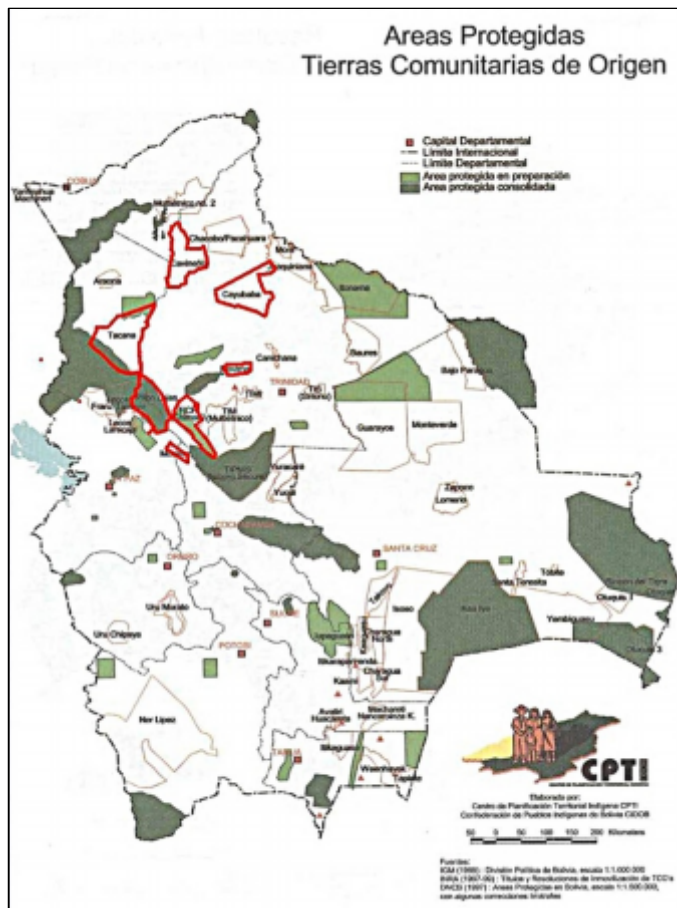


## Summary

This paper presents the results of the research on the learning methods and information taught to the indigenous children of the Bolivian Amazonian region. In these indigenous societies, territory is the criterion of organization of the epistemological processes, and the productive activities that adults realize in accordance with the ecosystems are an opportunity to develop the children's learning. The paper analyses how the indigenous peoples, the Tsimane', Mosestén, and Takana, construct their own out-of-school education system, based on the children's life cycles and physical and cognitive development at determined ages. This indigenous pedagogy must form the basis in the transformation of the school curriculum. Thus, the teaching will be based on their own culture, the children will learn better to read and write texts, a higher quality education will be reached in the indigenous schools, and a more just interculturality for all Bolivia.

## 1 Introduction

In this paper we present the implementation of the Regional Project of Bilingual Intercultural Education for the Amazon Region (EIBAMAZ) in Bolivia. The project aims to transform school curricula in indigenous areas by incorporating in them the characteristic knowledge and methodologies of the Mosestén, Takana, and Tsimane' peoples. The research was the responsibility of PROEIB Andes of the Universidad Mayor de San Simón university in Cochabamba, Bolivia. The following map shows the Original Communal Lands (TCOs in Spanish) in which the research was conducted.



Map of the Protected Areas Original Communal Lands

The new demands of the indigenous peoples of Bolivia in particular, and of Latin America in general, orientated the research methodology. In Bolivia, the fight of the indigenous peoples to appropriate the school and writing system dates back to the beginning of the 20th century, when between 1910 and 1930, the local Aymara chiefs defended their lands given to them by the colonial State with the title of property. This led to the indigenous authorities' conducting a search in the historical archives in Bolivia. Facing the big landowners' expansion to lands pertaining to indigenous communities, the Aymara in fact went to the archives of both Lima and Buenos Aires in search of these titles that legitimized their rights. The logical consequence of this struggle among the indigenous people was the growing feeling of the need to learn how to read and write in order to defend their rights. They

formed the clandestine Aymara schools which in the nights taught indigenous children how to read and write against the will of the landlords who said “a learned Indian is an arrogant Indian”, and violently suppressed this movement. Since then, the situation of the Bolivian indigenous peoples has changed so radically that we actually have an indigenous president, Evo Morales. In spite of this, the demand for an appropriate education that would recognize the people's systems of ancestral wisdom and their language continues.

The main theoretical concepts that support the research have been designed collectively with the indigenous peoples themselves. The concepts formed the basis for drawing up communitarian curricula in each of the Original Communal Lands of the Tsimane', Masetén, and Takana people. Thus, we treated concepts such as territory, which in the particular case of the Amazonian people not only permits to understand their culture and reality in political terms, but also helps to explain the processes of cultural socialization and education of the children in a more comprehensive framework for planning based on time and place. As a result, we came up with the concept of communitarian curriculum, which allows the social training of children and the learning of knowledge systems that are currently in use in the indigenous communities. Our work recovers the indigenous knowledge systems and verifies the genuine validity the systems have in understanding the realities in which each of these indigenous societies live in. They also help to solve the problems confronted by the indigenous societies' members in their everyday life and in relation to their specific environment. These knowledge systems, as well as other epistemological systems, can serve as a basis for the establishment of a school education sensitive to multiculturalism and dedicated to the reality of the peoples it is implemented on.

The methodological strategies to which the researchers resorted to in order to implement the research were based on the importance and key role of the participating indigenous peoples' political organizations in the whole process and, above all, the role of the indigenous researchers. These researchers guided the objectives of the project, collected, arranged in tables, systemized, and interpreted the data, and, in particular, constructed appropriate cultural categories based on which the research reports and communitarian curricula were composed.

Thus, our ethnographic research has aimed at reconstructing the communitarian curricula so that these would guide and make possible the socialization of the community's members and the acquisition of the knowledge systems that sustain the main cultural and productive activities of each of these communities. A central element in this analysis has been the adjustment of indigenous teaching to the life cycles of these people, and the institutionalization of the agents of education,



learning environments, educational material, learning activities, and evaluation criteria specific to the people. This entire systemization has permitted to postulate, in theory, the existence of a formal indigenous education system, strongly based on practical experience and religion. This system has been able to educate the Tsimane', Mosetén, and Takana children in the technology and productive labor characteristic to their people, as well as in environmental protection. Likewise, it has sustained the socio-historical reproduction of these communities.

## 2 Intercultural Bilingual Education – Between State policies and the demands of indigenous organizations

Since Bolivia, together with Guatemala, Ecuador, and Peru, is one of the countries with the largest indigenous population in Latin America<sup>1</sup>, the diverse range of cultural, linguistic, material, and immaterial expression is evident in the form and daily events of urban-rural settlements that reshape the geography of a country where only 30% of the territory (the high and cold areas of the highlands and the mesothermic valleys connected to the eastern plains) is home to approximately 3,621,500 indigenous Aymara, Quechua, and Uru inhabitants. The remaining 70% of the Bolivian land area (mainly warm lowlands of the Amazonía, Oriente, and Chaco regions) is predominantly occupied by 291.729 members of 33 indigenous peoples (López 2005: 38). This evident multicultural and multilingual composition of the country did not begin to permeate the stratified and diglossic state structure before the fight that the indigenous peoples and organizations led during the last three decades. As a result, they achieved the legal recognition of their territories by the Bolivian government. The territories were designated as Original Communal Lands and became the property of the indigenous peoples. The peoples, organized and represented by their own political institutions, currently administrate said areas according to the law 1715 INRA (law on the national services for agrarian reform of 18/10/96). Two years before the agrarian reform, the indigenous movement also achieved the elevation of the “multiethnic and pluri-cultural character of the Bolivian State” to a constitutional level by the Bolivian government in the constitutional reform of 1994. Furthermore, the law 1565 on education reform conceded a greater role to indigenous participation in the formulation of national edu-

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<sup>1</sup> According to the 2001 national population census (<http://www.ine.gov.bo>), the indigenous peoples represent 49,95% of the Bolivian population (with approximately 4.133.138 persons out of a total 8,274,325 Bolivians). However, the indigenous organizations criticize this data and, together with some researchers, maintain that 60% of the Bolivian population call themselves indigenous.

cation policies, through the Education Councils of Native Peoples (CEPO). Moreover, the government committed to start a process of implementing an Intercultural Bilingual Education model for all the habitants of the rural and urban areas, both indigenous and non-indigenous. The model rested on a constructivist theory of learning and in the certainty that diversity is a comparative advantage and a resource that will guide the transformation of education (López 2005).

Having said this, after 13 years from the start of the implementation process of the education reform in Bolivia, IBE has not extended to cover the entire country, and only a bilingual modality of education was implemented in some schools in rural areas with indigenous population, mainly in the valleys and the highlands. In the case of the Amazonian Mositén, Takana, Tsimane', Cavineño, and Movima peoples, we can affirm that although some of their schools did receive new education materials and some teachers did receive some training on the education reform and IBE, this was neither adequate nor sufficient, given that this material was written only in Spanish and principally for the urban context of cities. Similarly, bilingualism of state education could only be implemented with three of the largest indigenous peoples, the Quechua and Aymara in the Andean region, and the Guaraní in the lowlands. No bilingual education was implemented among the Amazonian peoples. This was mainly because these 33 peoples have low population density, due to the sustainable management of the fragile Amazonian ecosystem, and neither the government nor international cooperation wanted to invest in these peoples of small quantitative importance – but of great qualitative importance, given the fact that this cultural diversity also means a conservation of the Amazonian biodiversity. As far as the training of teachers was concerned, we have to note that it was sporadic and of low coverage and that few Amazonian indigenous teachers concluded their studies. This is reflected in the region's schools that do not have teachers that speak the Mositén and Takana languages (EIBAMAZ 2006). Thus, in addition to falling short of implementing IBE in the Amazonian region's schools, the technical teams of the reform did not change the material conditions of school education. As a result, the teachers continue implementing in their classrooms the traditional practices of teaching and learning based on dictation, copying, and mechanical memorizing of information.

What is more, the teaching and learning contents are de-contextualized from the culture, language, and environment of the Amazonian indigenous pupils. The teachers' old planning strategies are guided by texts based on behaviorism, by books written for the urban context, or by notes that the teachers themselves wrote when they were still studying in teacher training institutes or when they gave their very first classes. Thus, the de-contextualized book and the dominant Spanish lan-

guage continue determining the time and contents of education planning. In the case of the Tsimane' people of the San Borja region, we must emphasize that the education reform never even reached their schools. These schools continue to implement their teaching and learning processes based on the contents, methodologies, education material (written in learning books), and teacher training designed and directed by the missionaries of the "Evangelical Mission of New Tribes". The schools implemented bilingual education only for a transition period, during which the use of the Tsimane' language in the first school years was directed to enforce a definite transition to Spanish, to the cultural standards of the dominant society, and to the dogmatic guidelines of protestant Christianity. Consequently, although in theory the missionaries expressed interest toward cooperating with the indigenous communities, in practice they demonstrated a very limited openness and sensitivity in view of the ideological and cultural diversity of the Amazonian reality in which they work.

In respect to the economic, social, and political situation of the peoples in question, which finally determine the education process, we have to say that thanks to an incessant fight for their rights and the arduous marches "for territory and dignity", which (crossing more than 600 kilometers of jungle and mountains) were realized on foot to get to the seat of the state government, the indigenous peoples of Eastern Bolivia achieved the promulgation of a series of laws by the state from 1990 onwards. Among them were the INRA law, and other supreme decrees that recognized the indigenous people's culture and the legal character of the territories that they have historically occupied. Thus, they managed to contain the pressure of ranchers, forestry entrepreneurs, and immigrants coming from the Andean region, who all put pressure and subjugated the people's territory through the state's colonizing policies. Due to the revitalizing influx that the indigenous Amazonian peoples received with the legal recognition of their territories and local organizations, today we can talk about three indigenous peoples who are coordinated and cohesive in regard to the political, economic, and cultural management of resources.

With the first indigenous president of Latin America, the Aymara leader Evo Morales Ayma, assuming the presidency, the setting in motion of the appropriate curricula in school education is closer to becoming a reality. This opinion is based on the fact that the economic, social, and cultural policies of Bolivia swerve away from the neo-liberal direction they were heading towards. Now, the oil companies and other strategic businesses for the economy of our country are nationalized, a resolute intervention is made on the prices of the internal market, and the presence of children in public schools is subsidized through the voucher Juancito Pin-

to. Similarly, the basic needs of the elderly are attended to, by allocating them solidarity vouchers coming from the surplus of the direct taxes on the hydrocarbons. Furthermore, a project for a multicultural country is designed through a Constituent assembly that, in spite of strong opposition by the conservatives, still seeks to reform Bolivia through the passing of a new state constitution. Similarly, a draft of the Education Reform has been presented to the Congress, denominated “Avelino Siñani y Elizardo Pérez”, written predominantly by the indigenous organizations and the education councils of indigenous peoples. This draft still does not count with the approval of Congress due to the opposition of the old power groups sitting in Congress, and it is also opposed by some sectors of the teachers’ trade union. The teachers, motivated by their Marxist orthodox training, see the indigenous cultural demands only as a distraction from the class war. This draft, among other things, aims to decentralize national education and to “develop education plans and programs appropriate to the characteristics of each socio-cultural, ecological, and geographical context through curricular designs suited to the knowledge, thinking, feeling, doing, and being of the Bolivians, men and women, in the framework of the country’s interculturality processes” (Draft of Law on Education Reform: 2006. [www. constituyentesoberana.org /info/?q=nueva-ley-educacion-avelino-perez](http://www.constituyentesoberana.org/info/?q=nueva-ley-educacion-avelino-perez)).

This is the political framework in which the indigenous organizations of each TCO commit to the objectives of the EIBAMAZ project and apply them to the guidelines of the social projects and plans of indigenous territorial administration which have as their objective to guide and orientate their institutional activities in the coming years. Thus, from the middle of 2006, the indigenous political organizations and PROEIB Andes conducted a baseline study, the research questions of which were formulated in connection with sociolinguistic, socio-cultural, and socio-educational aspects of their communities. It was based on these events that in 2007, these parties agreed to write down the contents of the knowledge systems linked to their practice of hunting, fishing, agriculture, gathering, handicrafts, and ethno-medicine, shared by the Takana, Mosestén, Tsimane’, and Tsimane’-Mosestén peoples of the TCOs, and the different methods that the indigenous peoples use to teach and socialize their children with this knowledge. Thus, the main research questions of this last stage were: What are the life cycles of the members of the indigenous peoples participating in EIBAMAZ? What, how, when, and where do each of these communities teach and socialize their children with their social institutions and knowledge systems that support their habitual activities?

### 3 Culture, territory, and communitarian curriculum

We understand culture as the collection of socially constructed and shared habits, knowledge, practices, and worldviews, all strongly linked with the material conditions of survival of each society and their respective ecosystems. In other words, linked with the specific characteristics of the territory they need to occupy to ensure their physical and cultural reproduction. Thus, territory has a transcending role in the construction and socialization of the knowledge and habits of the indigenous Amazonian peoples, given that territory, as a juxtaposition of time and space and the natural cycles of the ecosystem, determines the structure of the calendar of productive activities specific to each people. Moreover, the territory determines the processes of individual and social intervention on the environment and the interaction between the individuals who, in turn, determine the education processes that are produced in this interaction. The Mositén people knows that when the lemon grass ripens, in March, they must go to their *cuchillas* (steep mounds with a sharp form) to hunt *taitetú* (*Collared Peccary*), *jochi* (*Agouti*), deer or *sari* (a rodent). In contrast, when the wild apples are ripe, in October and November, they head for the region of scrub and swamp plains of their territory to hunt for tapir meat. When the *chima* (a species of palm) ripens, in February and March, they go to the shrub lands, fallow lands, and plains to hunt *pavas campanillas* (*Blue-throated Piping-guan, a bird similar to the turkey*), *pavas roncadoras* (*Spix's Guan*), parrots, *parabas* (*Blue-throated Macaw*), *parabachis* (*Golden-collared Macaw*), *mutunes* (*Great Curassow*), *taitetúes* (*Collared Peccary*), deer, *saris* (a rodent), and *jochis* (*Agouti*). Similarly, the Takana people knows that *Collared Peccary*, wild boar, red brocket deer, *jochi pintado* (*Agouti*), *peta* (*Red-footed Tortoise*), tapir, *tatú* (armadillo), *pejichi* (armadillo), puma, ocelot, leopard, hedgehog or opossum are animals that can be hunted at night. They also know that if they wish to make handicraft products or pieces of art, they need to advance high into the hills to extract wood from thick trees and palms. In the months of April, May, and June, they need to go into the shrub lands to collect the seeds of *lágrimas de maría* (*Pink Rain Lily*) and *majillo* (a palm tree); in August, they need to collect the seeds of *sirari* (a canopy tree), *sululu* (a fruit), *ojo de toro* (a shrub), *pachiuvilla* (a palm tree), *cari- cari* (Acacia tree), *pakio* (a medicinal plant), and *solimán* (a herb); in September, they collect the seeds of oak; in October and November they stock up on seeds of *palma marfil* (ivory-nut palm); and from December to February they gather the seeds of *chonta loro* (a palm tree) and *motacú* (a palm tree). Similarly, the Tsimane' know in detail the components of their territory and each of the changes these undergo during the different seasons of the year

and according to the natural cycles of maturation of wild fruit that determine the different alimentation habits of animals. Thus, for example, they know that when the *cedrillo* (a cedar tree) ripens, which takes place in April, they can hunt tapirs, when the *majo* (a palm tree) ripens, in November, they can hunt tapirs, wild boars, *Collared Peccary*, *Agouti*, *Blue-throated Macaw*, and *monos silbadores* (*Capuchin Monkeys*), or when the *guapomó* (a plant) or *pacay* (a plant) bear fruit in August and September, they can go to the hills to hunt Capuchin monkeys, owl monkeys, *loros habladores* (*Blue-fronted Amazon*), *Blue-throated Macaw*, and *chichilos* (night monkeys) that arrive there to eat these fruit. Thus, each of these societies possesses a group of natural indicators that reveal when they should or should not realize certain activities in the different areas of their territory. The education agents' interaction with their children is precisely based on these climatic events of the ecosystem. Guided by the events, they direct the children's learning, adjusting continuously their pedagogic collaboration, showing the adequate forms of assuming group activities, giving suitable information, selecting or facilitating access to learning material, and evaluating and reinforcing learning. Hence, we talk about communitarian curricula, which refer to the cultural programs that support the socialization and education of children in each of these communities, both in material and abstract terms. Consequently, in their respective curricula, the indigenous peoples institutionalized the educative roles of the social participants that intervene in the education of children; of the activities held daily in the community and the hills; of knowledge; of socially appreciated skills and values; of the places in which the cultural and productive practices are conducted; of the culturally significant natural events; and of the materials with which the children learn and participate in social life.

In this framework, each communitarian curriculum is orientated towards the development of the children's physical and cognitive capacities, which are closely linked to the requirements of the territories they inhabit, and, in general terms, to the organization of cultural and physical stimuli for the development of prioritized intelligence and competences that permit resolving the problems arising in the actual environment in which a society lives. In this sense, Bowers (2002), recalling the works of Sapir, Whorf, and Vygotsky, refers to the cultural differences in connection with the forms of intelligence, the many ways of knowing, and the role of the language used in the process of incorporation to the cultural and linguistic group that one becomes a part of at birth. He goes on by writing how the linguistic group codifies the form in which other members think about the constantly changing fabric of the relationships that characterize everyday life and also codify the way in which they experience it. Thus, the geographic, linguistic, and cultural di-

versity of the country is also testimony of the convergence of multiple realities in the time and space of common interaction. Similarly, Bowers writes that:

*In reality, the evidence of profound differences in what could be denominated cultural epistemologies is more difficult to ignore, especially now that the members of the previously marginalized cultural groups are publishing more and more articles and books. There is yet another way of clarifying how culture influences the form of intelligence exhibited by the individual; namely, the role the languages of a culture plays in forming and sustaining a shared inter-subjective reality that permits its members to comprehend and respond intelligently in relation to how other people use a shared system of symbols. (Bowers 2002: 91)*

In fact, the coexistence of indigenous and non-indigenous knowledge systems and the development of intelligence valued both by the Westernized society and the indigenous societies in school environments is a challenge that the customized curriculums cannot leave without incorporating. This incorporation is demanded by a just interpretation of the multicultural and multi-lingual reality of the country and the epistemological observations of the contemporary theoretical currents. Having said this, it is important to point out that these indigenous knowledge systems are intimately linked to the conservation of the Amazon's biodiversity resources. These ethno-biological systems and their taxonomic systems, as well as territorial policies and the productive systems historically developed by these indigenous societies count with the existence and organization of natural cultural models. These models have permitted the conservation of the resources of Amazonian biodiversity, showing that nature is not a pre-social fact, but a cultural and epistemological construction, rooted in ritual, symbolic, and educational practices. Descola (1996) has termed this coexistence of animals, plants, supernatural beings, and humans as "societies of nature". These societies maintain a good order and balance of the biophysical circuits via specific cultural practices. Along these lines, Arturo Escobar (2000) maintains the need to dismantle the modern dichotomy of nature and culture. Instead, he argues, we should reflect on the way in which societies establish specific connections between nature and the cognitive, symbolic, and productive experience that guides it to bring up the concept of post-development as an alternative form to the capitalist model. This alternative form presents another model of life and society. At the same time, it is the indigenous societies' radical critique of the political power. This alternative view would force people to rethink globalization and modernity from the local societies' perspective,

where the relationship between culture and the environment occupies a central place. This perspective emphasizes the new epistemological importance that indigenous knowledge has on the Amazon region, on the social life that it creates, and on the active principles of the resources that exist in it. This knowledge is a product of a prolonged process of medical experimentation with plants, animal fats, bones, soils, and other natural goods to cure the illnesses that beset the indigenous peoples and to create new knowledge. From this new theoretical perspective, it is necessary to assure that the school does not mutilate, as it has done until now, this cultural diversity, but instead recreates and reinforces it, developing education programs sensitive to plurality, transforming existing societies into societies with shared knowledge. According to UNESCO:

*From the point of view of the societies of shared knowledge, it is imperative to ensure an efficient promotion of local knowledge, as well as live knowledge, and guarantee, when necessary, its protection against all forms of bio-piracy. It is also important to remember that multi-lingualism facilitates enormously the access to knowledge, above all in the school context. (UNESCO 2005: 163)*

Thus, the open-mindedness of the school to not only cultural and linguistic, but also epistemological, diversity presents the possibility to focus on education and move away from scientific knowledge, which is only a method to interpret and present reality. Yet, it is not the only one. We should open this method to a range of possibilities and sources of knowledge managed by the indigenous peoples. That is essentially Edgar Morin's proposal of the construction of a new meta-epistemology.

## 4 Ethnography and indigenous participation

Our work has a clear ethnographic profile in connection with its aspiration to comprehend what persons do, say, and think in the context of their cultural, symbolic, social, and economic ties and in the specific ways of managing the ecosystems and natural resources of their territory. This group of discourses and practices determines the social and epistemological construction of the territory, which clearly is, from the perspective of the studied indigenous peoples, the fundamental condition and base material for maintaining the culture and any education proposal. Therefore, in our research, we have paid special attention to the community's inter-subjective relations, treating them as permanent processes of social con-



struction of the reality and the territory from the cultural matrix of the Tsimane', Mosestén, and Takana peoples themselves. This emic research perspective seeks to understand the human ideas and behavior from the point of view of the social participants. It is a perspective that tries to situate itself "on the inside" instead of the exogenous perspective of traditional academic research. Hence, our research is a presentation of what the protagonists say, but also of the non-verbal acts of the social participants, reconstructed through participative and non-participative observation techniques.

This emic research perspective wishes to underline one methodological aspect in the process – the participation of the Takana, Mosestén y Tsimane' researchers in the work<sup>2</sup>. However, it should be noted that this participation of indigenous researchers did not come about only due to the importance of the indigenous language for the conducting of the interviews of monolingual elders and understanding the processes of the construction of knowledge inside each people. Rather, it was a fundamental question of responding to the methodological and epistemological challenge of doing work based on the cultural and mental horizon of the social participants themselves. These indigenous researchers have managed to give expression to the categories of thought characteristic of their culture in an appropriate vision that largely exceeds the role of the indigenous researchers as simple translators and field aids that traditional ethnographic research has assigned them. During research, driven by team coordination and the ethnographic principles of the research, they have worked autonomously, developed their own work methodologies according to their culture, and introduced cultural categories for explaining the Universe. They have done this particularly in relation to how the indigenous peoples themselves see and reflect their children's learning processes and the methodologies that the adults utilize to reproduce their knowledge and value systems in the younger generations.

Given the importance of the indigenous concept of "territory" in building cultural and knowledge identity, our research emphasized comprehending what is the relation this identity has with respect to the social training of individuals and the reproduction of different cultural paradigms in the three indigenous peoples. Thus, participants in community workshops<sup>3</sup> and group and individual interviews

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<sup>2</sup> The selection of indigenous researchers was carried out by each of the indigenous organizations, and the only prerequisite was for the researchers to know how to write in the correspondent indigenous language. In connection with this, we must note that in the case of the Mosestén language, there does not exist yet an alphabet agreed on by the speakers, which, as is the case with other Amazonian peoples, makes the process of writing difficult in that language.

<sup>3</sup> We wish to emphasize this methodology due to the good results that it has offered, as it permits working with information that is subjected to social control. Unlike individual interviews, where the narrator has absolute liberty to tell his information, in the communal workshops, these ac-

treated themes connected to learning environments and the contexts of time and space in which the productive and cognitive activities of these three peoples are conducted. In this way, we learned that peoples of Tsimane', Mosetén, and Takana possesses its own epistemological calendar and map of the time and space according to which not only the community accomplishes its cultural and productive activities, but which also contains the form in which the different natural cycles occur; the ripening of jungle fruit, the season of giving birth of the animals, or the spawning of fish that determine the productive activities, and, consequently, the learning processes.

The orientation of this research work of two years – being the preparation for an education intervention phase – has aspired to exceed a culturalist vision of curricular diversification. This vision is centered, above all, on the gathering of stories and has been molded in the schools in the frequently distorted musical practices that do not respect the communal calendar and are limited to being school representations with "typical" uniforms that only border on folklore, falling short of genuinely representing the in-depth symbolic feeling expressed by the indigenous societies through their clothing, textiles, and music. For all of these motives and responding to the historic demand of the indigenous peoples for a productive education, the research on knowledge systems of the Takana, Mosetén, and Tsimane focuses on their principal socio-economic systems. The systems of traditional knowledge, selected in communal assemblies and in talks with the elders of the visited communities and oriented by the indigenous organizations and their plans of indigenous territorial management in each of the Communal Lands of Origin were: hunting, fishing, agriculture, collection of wild fruit, medicine, and art. These productive and epistemological systems are, with more or less intensity, present in all these peoples. Some people value hunting, fishing, or agriculture more according to the physical characteristics of the ecosystem where they live or to the proximity to rivers, for example, or other typical features of their environment. Yet, they all share one characteristic: that the abovementioned productive systems are a fundamental part of their economic life and of their symbolic interchange. We wish to point out that these productive and epistemological systems are not only related to the economic life of the communities, but also form part of an indigenous education that, in addition to transmitting information and technical skills, also trains children in the moral and religious value systems of the culture

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counts are evaluated collectively, and sometimes corrected. Moreover, they cause the narrator him or herself to think what he or she is going to talk in front of the other members of the community. More importantly, the communal workshops enable various persons to complete the information and construct a collective text in a discursive environment of conversation that is characteristic of the indigenous cultures.

to which they belong. At the same time, these systems are reproduced and transformed through their education practices. It is important to note that, methodologically speaking and in the design of research instruments, we have focused on analyzing the forms of how these societies reproduce their culture from one generation to the other and on the methodologies used in the indigenous families in order to start these processes of socialization.

Previous to realizing any educational intervention, we have preferred working and systemizing the out-of-school communitarian curricula of the indigenous education to avoid subordinating traditional wisdom in the school structures to the contents and methodologies of the civilizational order of the industrialized societies. Of course, we also consider the need to work on the systems of national and global knowledge, so that the development of appropriate or local curricula would not once again produce systems of social exclusion of the indigenous children that work with these curricula. This is a question of respecting both systems, making their differences visible, but also of establishing epistemological bridges between the two.

The construction of the communitarian curricula has been a collective work completed through communal workshops, life histories, and interviews. In the collection of data, privilege was conceded to those knowledge systems that were considered the most important ones for the economic life of the indigenous peoples. In addition, emphasis has been put on the life cycles that, determining the grade of physical and cognitive development of the child, also influence on the activities that their parents assign them and give them responsibility by. Consequently, the life cycles condition the activities, or teaching and learning, that the adults realize with the children in each stage of their life. These matrices permitted us to learn people's life cycles. Next, we are going to present the life cycles of the Tsimane':

**Life cycle of the Tsimane' people**

Age	Name in the indigenous language	Main characteristics
0–1	Joino'- vodo'yi	A recently born baby
1–2	Joino' vetsyjoityi'	A baby that weans
3–4	Aty fer mi'ij	A small child that already walks well
4–6	Miquity= Male Miquis= Female	The child keeps company with his/her older siblings and has a responsibility of protecting and supporting his/her younger siblings.
7–12	Ututy= Male Utus= Female	During this period, the child is taught and learns cultural knowledge and practices of his/her community more comprehensively than in the previous period.
13–18	Nanaty=Male Nanas= Female	The child plans and carries out the cultural practices of his/her community by his/her own initiative. The child has more independence in respect to the adults, and he/she is an education agent in respect to his/her younger siblings.

The study of life cycles enabled the identification of what knowledge and activities the indigenous children carry out in each of these stages of their life, as well as the methodologies with which the learning and teaching processes are established. The third column of the table referred to the system of values that the indigenous children internalize during their socialization. The abovementioned values are definitely considered fundamental ones in the indigenous education, given that their task is not only to transmit information, but moreover to train persons with values of solidarity, reciprocity, liberty, and personal initiative. Appendix 1 displays the first table closely linked to the ethnographic data collected through field observations and interviews with adults and children of the visited communities.

Subsequently, after doing the work of theoretical classifying of the first versions of the tables and obtaining one considered to be representative of the indigenous people, the different tables were validated in assemblies of correctors, in which the majority of the authorities of the communities that form the TCOs were present, as well as its base representatives. The opportunity offered by these communal workshops was used to fill the tables under the following topics: What do the children

know? What do they do? How have they learned? Who taught them? What materials are used in teaching? Where have they learned? (See appendix 2).

The drawing up of these sets of columns has enabled to clearly identify the principal local education agents, the methodologies that are utilized in the teaching process of the indigenous children and the environments in which these cognitive processes and the materials that are used in the teaching are produced. Without any doubt, all this work helped us to understand that the active methodologies through which the indigenous children learn in the family can easily orientate also the classroom practices and help to exceed an education based on copying, dictation, and outmoded learning, denominated by Paulo Freire as “banking education” (2005). The identification of local agents of education and of communitarian learning environments such as the hills in hunting, the rivers and lakes in fishing, or the productive plots in agriculture can introduce possible out-of-classroom didactic activities with the aim of bringing together the school and the life of the indigenous communities, which is what we need. Lastly, the work on the education materials used by the indigenous peoples can help to surpass the school culture that the whole state, the international partners, and the NGOs expect, and to contribute to the fact that teachers themselves introduce their didactic material based on the resources, both natural and intellectual, already existing in the communities. This would mean a relative didactic autonomy for the people and a profound process of decentralization of education.

All of the cognitive activities of the Mosestén, Tsimane’, and Takana children have been reconstructed in the indigenous language and based on the life cycles of the people. Thus, the life cycles function as genuine guides of the cognitive development of the indigenous child and can certainly be of great aid in the teachers’ planning and teaching work in schools with indigenous pupils, given that the life cycles can then inform the teachers on the knowledge and cultural values of their pupils.

In conclusion, it has to be noted that in each of the Original Communal Lands, tables of six knowledge systems were drawn up, and they contain the information concerning each of the life cycles of the Takana, Tsimane’, and Mosestén peoples. These tables show what the indigenous children do and learn in each stage of their lives and that they clearly correspond with each of the indigenous languages. For the third and last table (see appendix 3), we have used the term ‘communitarian curriculum’ in order to emphasize that the education of these indigenous peoples is also formal, planned, and institutionalized by the indigenous societies themselves. To continue characterizing it as informal is nothing more than a bad habit of colonial ethnocentric thinking. In the case of the studied indigenous peoples, the

children's teaching is largely motivated by the fathers of families for the child to construct the knowledge based on his or her physical and cognitive development and individual interests. As part of the teaching, the adults, in addition to considering the age of the children, support and induce the personal curiosity and interest of each child, which is the principle underpinning their educational efforts.

In reality, intercultural bilingual education is a theoretical and methodological effort to increase the quality of education, based on the culture and language of the indigenous schoolchildren themselves. The aim is to achieve a smaller school drop-out rate and increase the retention rates in schools, but the challenge is also to construct new indicators of education quality that would take into account variables such as the satisfaction of children for being able to speak their own language and treat the knowledge of their parents in classrooms that become more democratic by the day. Thus, instead of depreciating their culture, the children have the opportunity to strengthen their ethnic identity and develop their self-esteem in the schools that have until now systematically denied them as persons and as a cultural and linguistic collectivity. This is the only way to achieve a situation in which indigenous children learn happily in schools and, in the end, can acquire writing to wield the dreaded power that it carries and that was systematically sought by the indigenous peoples.

## **5 The education of the Masetén, Cavineña, Tsimane', Movima, and Tsimane'-Masetén peoples**

In 2006, as a fruit of the research process implemented in the Original Communal Lands of the Masetén, Cavineña, Tsimane', Movima, Takana, and Tsimane'-Masetén peoples, we now have five baseline studies that present in detail the socio-cultural, socio-educational, and sociolinguistic situation of the indigenous peoples participating in the EIBAMAZ project. These reports present collected data on the actual reality of the indigenous peoples, among this the constitution of family; the organization and political structure of each community and the TCO; the distribution of gender and generational roles in the family and the community; the state of qualification of the indigenous territories; the principal economic activities the members exercise; and a descriptive approach to the knowledge they use, in addition to the linguistic and educational situation in the settlements of the studied TCOs. This last data proves a general process of loss of the indigenous languages, the existence of their own education institutions, and notorious problems of school coverage and drop-out.

Based on the results of the baseline studies conducted in 2006, the research teams of the four Original Communal Lands of the Tsimane', Mosetén, Takana, and Tsimane'-Mosetén initiated in 2007 an ethnographic study on the indigenous traditional wisdom and on the processes of childhood socialization evolved both in the family and the community. The aim was that these processes serve as resources in the elaboration of the indigenous peoples' own school education. Based on this research, we can affirm with certainty that the indigenous peoples uphold a formal education system that, in the same way as a school or some other education institution of the Western society, has an institutional curriculum that guides the communal education processes. This curriculum contains its own learning subject matter, which in the local environment means complex knowledge systems that uphold the economic and cultural practices of each of the indigenous peoples. Furthermore, it displays an adjustment of the administering of teaching and learning according to the cognitive and physical development of the children, which in turn is determined by the life cycles that the indigenous children go through. The indigenous peoples' education system encompasses its own traditionally institutionalized agents of education, specific teaching and learning methodologies that these agents implement, and learning materials and instruments for each life cycle. The materials and instruments are put to use at specific moments and in specific places to serve each pedagogic activity. Finally, the education system features the indigenous people's own criteria for the evaluation and validation of learning.

In the case of these people, the life cycles constructed by the culture and clearly specified in each indigenous language show what physical and cognitive characteristics the children, both boys and girls, have. Thus, the materials, contents, methodologies, activities, and learning environments vary in function of the perceptible capacities of the children and the necessities implemented by their territory. Thus, for example, the children are taken by their parents to the places in which they realize productive activities or are left to be looked after by their older siblings while the parents work. At this stage, observation and imitation are the prevailing teaching and learning strategies in a pedagogic process that could be termed "modeled after children in real contexts", given that the fathers, mothers, or other family members construct the model that is to be followed. This enables the identification of the child with the role and the personality of the child minder that is of the same sex as the child, thus reconstructing the characteristic gender roles of each culture. Consequently, by offering explanations on the experiences their children have or keeping company with them and guiding them in carrying out tasks assigned to them, the parents create for the children a theoretical and practical scaffolding that will support new learning. Alternatively, the children form

small learning communities that share knowledge on their reality, imitate the behavior of the adults and reproduce the institutions of their community through playing games, inspect the territory that encircles their locality, and participate in work and learning activities according to their age. Similarly, being involved in the activities carried out by their parents, the children hear the conversations of adults and ask on the universe of elements that they observe, learning in a highly significant context. In addition, later the children have the opportunity of interacting with the learning objects, assuming by themselves some tasks that they are able to carry out with the members of their family and their community. Thus, boys of seven years or more learn to use small bows and arrows that the adults make them in ritual events, and begin to practice aiming at fruit hanging from branches, birds, insects, or the fish of the streams flowing near their community. The girls, on the other hand, learn the art of weaving with cotton, assuming responsibilities of weaving their own *maricos* (woven bags) in a long and complex learning process directed by their mothers (EIBAMAZ 2008).

In this sense, the indigenous education institutions have proved their validity in the social life and the specific material reality of each society, given that they train and educate subjects with values, knowledge, and skills needed to solve the particular problems of the reality they experience. The societies' challenges also depend on the ecosystems that they control to utilize in an appropriate and sustainable manner the natural resources that exist in these and which the indigenous people need to carry out their activities of surviving and artistic expression in accordance with their culture. Thus, for example, through the learning of the oral and mythical history of their ancestors, the indigenous people know that the trees and animals of the hills are watched over by spiritual beings that protect them and have the power of punishing those who end their lives or hurt them without a just reason. To become emotionally stable and to cure their illnesses, the natives learn to display complex magical-religious proceedings and also to combine the active compounds of an infinity of herbs, resins, animal fats, insects, soils, fibers, bones, and other medicinal goods existing in their environment. This knowledge is transmitted from one generation to the next through education. Similarly, in order to realize their agricultural activities, the members of the community learn to recognize or interpret natural indicators that inform them on climatic changes and on the characteristics of the different times of the year. Thus, the members of the Takana people know that when the leaves of the *ambaibo* tree turn over, when the Toucan sings, when the ants fly, or when the pigs circle around in their sties, it will start to rain very soon. To dedicate to hunting, the Mosetén, Takana, or Tsimane' learn the adequate skills to orientate themselves and to move in the hills. Furthermore, they



learn the plants that could save them in case they have an accident or are bitten by venomous snakes; the meaning of dreams that tell them the proximity of unfortunate events; the time and place in which they can obtain their food and those specific places in the jungle, where, according to the periods of ripening of wild fruit, the animals gather to eat, or the salt deposits where the animals go to compliment their diet with salt, or the places where for example the wild boars gather to bathe when it is too hot and spread mud on their bodies to avoid the stinging of the horse flies or other insects found in the Amazonian region.

Where the school curriculum can follow a process independent of the activities carried out outside the school, the communitarian curriculum cannot, given that it is strongly rooted in the practices the children realize every day together with their parents and older siblings. That is to say, the communitarian curriculum is linked to productive activities that the indigenous society carries out in their continually transforming territory. In addition, because the indigenous peoples' practices are the results of multiple natural events, the interaction of the apprentices with their caretakers and with the learning objects is developed in the framework of a temporal and spatial itinerary fixed by the specific territory of the peoples. This leads us to affirm that there is a spatial-temporal route to the learning of indigenous knowledge systems. Hence, the EIBAMAZ project helped to reconstruct the way in which the communitarian curricula facilitate children's social training and learning of the complex knowledge systems characteristic of their people, among them hunting, fishing, collection of wild fruit, art and handicrafts, agriculture, and ethno-medicine. It has to be noted how in the methodological description it was explained that the reconstruction of contents, methodologies, learning activities, education materials, etcetera, were realized according to the local cultural horizon and following the peoples own taxonomic criteria.

It is through this precise education system that the Mosetén, Takana, and Tsimané have been able to reproduce their own taxonomic system of classification of animals and to distinguish in great detail the different species that exist within this general classification. The following table of the characteristics of hunting of the communitarian curriculum of the Tsimané and Mosetén partially reproduces this complex classification system:

**Nanayi' in** (Birds)

**Muiyas mi'is in** (Birds that walk on the ground, “runners”)

**Muijyas mi'is jebakdye' in** (Ground animals)

**Chewes dära'ches mi'is jebakdye' in** (Monkeys, climbers, or tree-dwelling animals)

**Sana' mi' is in** (Reptiles or “animals that crawl on the ground”)

**Okoko in** (Amphibious)

Hence, the natives study the animals and classify them according to size, color, taste, body form, movements, sounds they emit, food they consume, the places they inhabit, the tracks they leave, and the relation of coexistence they have with other animals, forming thus their own taxonomic system according to indigenous epistemology. Similarly, thanks to the importance that the indigenous people give to the knowledge of their territories and the events that take place in them (product of the convergence between time and space), the Mosetén, Takana, or Tsimané' hunters know precisely when and where they can hunt for each animal. In addition, they know with the same precision the behavior of the animals, plants, and the spirits of the hills during different seasons of the year, that is to say, in the rainy, dry, and cold season. Hence, the indigenous people know which animals they can find and when in the bathing places, salt deposits, palm fields, basins, shrub lands, liana forests, *jatata* palm forests, areas containing fruit, fallow lands, and other environments of their territory.

## 6 Some observations on the research process

The main methodological conclusion is that the participation of speakers and thinkers of the indigenous languages is indispensable for the ethnographic study of traditional knowledge systems. Only in that way is it possible to launch an emic research that constructs the cultural data tables of the peoples with whom the work is being done. In such research, working “on” the indigenous peoples is no longer the top priority, but working with them, using instruments that permit the indigenous persons themselves to speak in the research and construct the social senses that are written in the text. Always in relation to the methodology, another important finding was to affirm that the indigenous methodological strategy used

to teach children was based on the construction of knowledge by the children and the Tsimane', Mosetén, and Takana parents themselves. Thus, they do not tend to transmit content to the children through written messages, as is the case in school. The parents encourage the children to build their own knowledge through curiosity, asking questions, imitating, and practical examples. They learn by doing, but also by listening, and the main objective of the indigenous education is to cultivate the attentive observation and spirit of investigation in the children.

Furthermore, the indigenous education is formal and institutionalized. Denying this is only a display of ethnocentricity. In the indigenous peoples visited in the project, time and place constitute one unity that organizes and adjusts the epistemological and productive activities of its habitants. In this way, when we study the life cycles and the physical and cognitive development of the indigenous children, the territory has a predominant role. The territory, as an interrelation of time and space and natural cycles, is an environment that not only promotes cultural learning and teaching but also activates the methodologies and the use of didactic materials in the processes discussed in this paper. This epistemological construction of the territory is more prominent when we talk about the productive systems and the cognitive processes that these systems generate. It can be said that the organization of the wisdom of these three indigenous peoples is articulated in relation to the climatic rainy and dry seasons, the ripening of the fruit of the hills, taking place in certain seasons and according to the variables of the ecosystems that the rain-water produces. This continuous change conditions not only the agricultural productive practices, but also those of hunting, fishing, and the collection of wild fruit. Moreover, each season of the year conditions not only the productive activities, but also the territorial spaces where human activities are concentrated and the consequent cognitive processes that are developed in these spaces. Thus, we wish to warn that with climate change not only will the scenery in which communitarian life is being led change, but also the material conditions of cultural production will be modified. Therefore, also the solutions that the communities have developed in respect to their environment will change, and so will alter the intervention that each individual carries out on the social life in which he or she participates.

This permanent change in scenery, both physical and temporal, also entails the emergency of specific knowledge on the concrete inter-subjective relationships each individual has with the environment around him or her. Hence, in the indigenous environment, the fair help a guardian gives to the child when it confronts a determined problem of its reality can only be understood and has meaning in the territorial context in which he or she has grown in. Thus, the organization of the curriculum is marked by the different natural seasons and determined by the terri-

tory where the productive activities are carried out and where the consequent learning processes are activated in the indigenous children. In this sense, the territory is a social and epistemological construction. A metaphorical observation would permit to consider the territory as an enormous school, where the seasons of the year play a distributing role of learning time similar to the classroom timetable. This work has tried to uncover precisely that intricate and complex relationship that exists between the territory, climatic cycles, and the epistemological constructions that are generated in the Mose'tén, Tsimane', and Takana societies.

In relation to didactic materials, our studies have showed that the indigenous people can produce materials constructed with the raw materials of their environment and thus are able to contribute to moving away from processes of teaching through books, making education active, as is the case among the Tsimane', Mose'tén, and Takana. Currently, the learning and classroom activities are almost 100% centered on books. In this mode, the logic of copying and dictating predominates. This is why it is important to be able to regain, in the classroom, activities those active principles of indigenous pedagogy, in order to achieve a situation where the children produce meaningful texts for resolving problems related to their everyday life and based on the ecosystems they live in.

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## Chapter 5

### Appendix 1: Table of testimonies

EIBAMAZ – Elaboration of local curriculum – Tsimane' people

Instruments for curricular design

Knowledge system: agriculture

Age group sequence

This table reflects the first version of the age group cycles of the Tsimane' people. It was improved and completed based on workshops realized with the wise old men and women of the Tsimane'.

The name of the age group	Competence: Knowledge (Kn) Abilities (A) <sup>4</sup>	Testimonies / Observations	Methodology
0-2-3 years Joino (Baby)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-The baby recognizes hunting and the piece of land where the house with agricultural products is. (Kn)</li><li>-The baby touches the products that are in the vicinity of the kitchen. (A)</li><li>- The baby crawls in the vicinity of the house and out of it where the mother is. (A)</li><li>-The baby Interacts with the elements in its environment through playing games: the baby picks up small sticks or branches and also soil to play, touching and moving around. (A)</li><li>-The baby recognizes sensations of cold, hot, light, darkness and wind. (K)</li><li>-The baby moves its body in the direction of the persons that are close by: parents, members of family. (A)</li></ul>	The mother tills the land with her older children, clearing out weeds with a machete. One of her small children of one year is two meters away on the other side of her. It is a cloudy and cold day, the wind blows hard. The child is not warmly dressed and withdraws when the wind blows hard. (Observed by San Antonio. 17/05/07)	<p>The baby learns through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-The observation of the home environment: the living room, kitchen, and family farm.</li><li>- Contact with the soil, plants, products, insects, animals and climatic variations.</li><li>-The teaching of their parents who instruct them, showing their actions involved in the activity and mentioning the names of the products and other objects.</li><li>-Repeating the words of the parents.</li><li>-The joino' learns by imitating what it observes about its parents or older siblings.</li><li>-The joino' learns by playing in its environment, carrying out agricultural activities.</li></ul>

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<sup>4</sup> The abbreviations (Kn) and (A) correspond to Knowledge and Abilities, respectively.

Table continues ...

Testimonies / Observations	Values /Attitudes	Testimonies/Observations
<p>When there are brothers of different ages present in the farm, the father teaches the older ones and the joíno'. The baby observes and listens to what the father or mother does or says. The parent is teaching verbally the smaller children. (Observed by San Antonio.19/05/07)</p> <p>The knowledge we acquire with the father on agriculture when we are from 0 to 3 years old we do by playing with our brother. He looks after us when mother is not with us, because she is working. With our brother we learn to talk. We also learn to talk with our father and mother. They talk to us with nice words and also our father takes us to the farm. There we only play, making houses and then resting. (Luciano Roca. S.B.27/07/07)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-The baby boy or girl is at this age in contact with the family, the older brothers and sisters that look after it. The baby plays in direct contact with its surroundings.</li> <li>-The baby has a recreational attitude and attention to its surroundings.</li> <li>-The baby has active contacts through play: it is not passive.</li> <li>-The baby interacts with the members of the family.</li> <li>-The baby values the family, notices the help and attention of the parents and family members who take care of, attend, feed and put on clothes on it.</li> </ul>	<p>While the parents were in the banana farm, tidying up with a machete in hand, 3 of their children were about 3 meters away. One of them, a baby of approximately one year of age, was swinging in a hammock improvised between two medium-sized trunks, the oldest girl of 5 years was swinging her brother, while the younger brother was playing with dirt, branches and leaves under the hammock and by his two siblings. (Obs. San Antonio.16/05/07)</p>

## Chapter 5

### Appendix 2: Tsimane' Mosetén Table

Knowledge system: Hunting

Male: Mikity (tsi) Ichu'kity (mos)

Female: Mikis (tsi) Ichu'kis (mos)

From the moment the child talks and walks solidly until the child begins to practice shooting with a bow (from approximately 1 ½ years to 6 years of age).

What do the children know?	What do the children do?	Animals that the children hunt	Who teaches the children?	How do the children learn?	Learning materials	Where do the children learn?
The children know some names of animals.	Mikity and Mikis (boy and girl). They wait for their father, who went hunting, to ask him some things about the hunting. (What is that? What is it called?)		It is the father who teaches them the names of the animals he hunted.	They learn by observing, listening, and pronouncing the names of the animals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The animals that the father hunted.</li> </ul>	They learn at home.
They know how the animals are cut up.	Mikity y Mikis (boy and girl). They work together with their parents, reaching the knife, grabbing the legs of the animal to cut it up. If it is night time, they hold the flashlight.		The parents do. They teach them to hold down the animal and to use the knife.	They learn by listening to and looking at the way in which an animal is cut up.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knife.</li> <li>• Flashlight.</li> <li>• Machete.</li> </ul>	Their principal learning environment is the home.
Imagine what the hunting is like in the hills.	Mikity y Mikis (boy and girl). The children attentively listen to and ask the father how he hunted the wild boar and play with the brothers as if they were hunting an animal.		Their family members teach them how to hunt in the hills or in the jungle. Also, the brothers collaborate in the teaching.	They learn by listening to and imagining through playing hunting.		They learn at home and in places near their home.





## Chapter 5

### Appendix 3: Communitarian curriculum of the takana people

#### Knowledge system: Hunting

Age group: Edhe chidhi (a young boy) Epune chidhi (a young girl) of 6 to 12 years of age.

Knowledge	Contents	Learning activities and environments
- An Edhe chidhi skillfully lists the hunting tools that he needs to take with them when he joins his father to the hills (woven bag, machete, slingshot, provisions, hook) (A)	The acquisition of this knowledge requires the following subject matter: Proceedings needed in hunting: Preparing the tools. (For more detail, see section 4: Techniques)	- The father takes his son with him when he goes hunting during the day. The child prepares the necessary tools according to his father's instructions. Environments: home
- An Edhe chidhi knows the chirapa <sup>5</sup> (shika) as a necessary piece of clothing for hunting. (Kn)	The acquisition of this knowledge requires the following subject matter: Proceedings needed in hunting: Go in chirapa or old clothes. (For more detail, see section 4: Techniques)	- An Edhe chidhi observes that his father puts on a chirapa when he goes hunting. Environments: home
- An Edhe chidhi can carry small and medium-sized animals that his father, his older brothers, or their dogs hunt in the hills (partridge, turkey, badger). (A)	The acquisition of this knowledge requires the following subject matter: What we need to do now. - What the man (father) does when he goes hunting. - What the woman does (mother). - What the oldest son does. - What the oldest daughter does. - What the small children do. (For more detail, see section 3: Socio-spatial organization)	- An Edhe chidhi transports the small animals that the father, brothers, or dogs hunt in his woven bag or in a backpack. Environments: the hills
- An Edhe chidhi recognizes through observation the path where the animals are, when he goes with his father. (A)	The acquisition of this knowledge requires the following subject matter: The places where the hunted animals are found: Fallow lands Streams Shrub lands Liana forests Jajata palm tree forests (For more detail, see section 2: The environment)	An Edhe chidhi walks with his father when he goes with his father to hunt, and observes everything that there is in the natural environment, asking his father if he finds something that catches his attention. Environment: The hills and paths.
- An Edhe chidhi knows it is necessary not to make noise when they go hunting to the hills with his father. (Kn)	The acquisition of this knowledge requires the following subject matter: Proceedings needed in hunting: Do not make noise. (For more detail, see section 4: Techniques) In addition: Remain silent to hear the speech of the hills. (For more detail, see section 6: Religion and oral tradition)	- An Edhe chidhi goes with his father when the father goes to hunt during the day. When the Edhe chidhi goes with his father, he walks behind the father and talks. If they hear an animal, the father recommends that the boy keeps silent. The boy walks behind his father, keeping silent. The boy does a two-hour walk (10 km.) when he goes with his father to the hills. -At this age, an Edhe chidhi hunts small monkeys. Environments: the hills
- An Edhe chidhi knows how to train aiming with the slingshot, firing at fruit, squirrel monkeys and pumas (in rare occasions), or knocking down nests of sticks. (A)	The acquisition of this knowledge requires the following subject matter: Making and using the slingshot. (For more detail, see section 5: Technology)	- The Edhe chidhi practices his aiming when he walks in the hills with his father, firing his slingshot at small monkeys or the fruit of trees. - Similarly, he practices his aiming when he plays with his friends in the surroundings of his community. Environments: the hills and the surroundings of the community

<sup>5</sup> A traditional piece of clothing that is used for hunting and agricultural work.

Table continues...

Methodology	Learning materials and other elements	Evaluation
- The Edhe chidhi learns the recommendations and explanations that his father offers him in respect to the material that the boy is to prepare in order to go to the hills with his father.	Material: Woven bag, machete, slingshot, provisions.	The father evaluates: - The pertinence of the materials transported to the hunting places.
- The Edhe chidhi learns by observing the father's clothing when the father goes hunting. - The Edhe chidhi learns from his father's explanations in respect to work clothes.	Material: Chirapa.	The father evaluates: - The relation between the activity that is realized in the community and the clothing that is to be worn.
- The Edhe chidhi learns from the explanations of his father. - The Edhe chidhi learns by observing his father when the father carries animals.	Material: Small animals, woven bag, backpack.	The father evaluates: - The ability of the Edhe chidhi to carry the animal.
- The Edhe chidhi learns by observing the natural environment. - The Edhe chidhi learn the explanations given by his father.	Material: tracks, trees.	The father evaluates: The certainty with which he recognizes the paths made by the animals.
- The Edhe chidhi learns by going to hunt in the hills with his father.	- The speech of the hills. - The sounds of nature.	- The father evaluates: - The capacity to remain silent. - The endurance of the Edhe chidhi in the walk.
- The Edhe chidhi learns by observing his father when they use the slingshot. - The Edhe chidhi learns by practicing the use of the slingshot with his friends.	Material: slingshot.	The father evaluates: - The use of fruit and other elements during the training of the Edhe chidhi.



# FINAL CONCLUSIONS

Juan de Dios Simón



## 1 Main results

I will present the main results obtained in the research process in order to go on referring to those that might have some continuity:

*(a) The educational and pedagogic approach of the research on IBE has been recovered with the contribution of indigenous participants*

With recovering the pedagogic approach, we refer to the fact that we have achieved a channeling of efforts towards education, cognitive dialogue, knowledge and wisdom, as well as human attitudes. It is possible to observe a decrease in the dependency of the linguistic and anthropologic currents that over-influenced IBE, which in the past had hidden all the psychological, biological, social, and spiritual development of the collective person and had given priority to the structuralism of the languages and cultures with a strong anthropocentric slant.

This situation limited seeing other essential dimensions of IBE, such as the essence of the endogenous, familiar, and communal education, its political character in the movement of indigenous peoples, their significance in terms of economy, the collective rights to territory, self-determination, and relative autonomy. Through the research applied on education and the participation of indigenous persons in the process, we have reconstructed a path towards education needed for “good living” and the achievement of the “fullness” of life.

*(b) Documentation of the collective knowledge of Amazonian and Mayan peoples that transcends the countries' political and historical borders.*

The research shed light on the indigenous world existing before the constitution of states and national borders. The research findings are validated to a large extent by the documentation of the Mayan world, developed in Guatemala through the book “The Enchantment of Reality”, as well as by the Mexican and the Honduran Mayas. For example, the management of the influence of the *nawal's* energies as a synthesis of the relation of the macro-cosmos with the micro-cosmos in the life of the indigenous peoples helped them to

## Final conclusions

achieve the fullness of life, a practice managed before the arrival of the Spanish.

On the other hand, without making much of a comparative analysis effort, we know that the Amazonians, either in Bolivia, Ecuador, or Peru, share the total defense of their territory not as a piece of land for cultivation, but as a political, social, and spiritual space. In this space they practice their autonomy, their self-determination, and, above all, their worldview, given that they have contact with the plants, animals, water, bones, medicinal plants, fruit, etc. To the Amazonians, losing their territory means losing their life.

Much history that was only known in oral tradition has been documented, not without first clarifying that not all could or should be documented. From the indigenous point of view, the study of their spiritual experience and worldview could not yield conclusive results in such a short period of time, nor was the Spanish language able to express them.

*(c) The research created theoretical, methodological, and attitudinal challenges for the university researchers, and motivated the search for adequate answers in connection with the participation of actors as collective subjects.*

Despite the fact that researchers resorted to proven methods such as the organization of workshops, polls, interviews in the mother tongue, and the structuring of indicative instruments, the process incorporated an attempt at the emic perspective, i.e. to achieve a view from the inside, from the indigenous cultures. The guides, elders, and wise old men and women talked and taught that in order to understand the indigenous world, we should listen to the silence, observe the dark and brightness, and imitate the equilibrium of the Universe. The role of the advice was understood as a practical solution in life and for life.

Furthermore, the construction of characteristically indigenous cultural categories is something novel. Despite the historic dominance of the non-indigenous academics and intellectuals in the development of the research, there was an attempt at getting rid of hierarchies between the non-indigenous academics and the researchers of indigenous origin that were part of the process. The reason behind this was also perhaps the fact that the indigenous persons were not mere workers, but in general had the support of the head of the families and the authorities of the community. It would be difficult for many academics to give up their "academic prestige" that they themselves have constructed or have demanded, imitating other models. However, the indigenous

persons invited others to apply the concept of complementation, and equilibrium, without hegemonies and much less discrimination by academics against wise old men and women and guardians of ancestral knowledge.

*(d) Gradual elimination of the subject-object relation, the role of an informant, and the emergence of the collective subject*

It was recognized that the indigenous participants are collective subjects of the research. Efforts were made to transform in practice the role of informants and objects of study that for so long the indigenous peoples, persons, and institutions had suffered in the hands of social scientists. We should continue working in this area to achieve a research based on a subject-to-subject setting and centered on the collective instead of the individual subject.

To understand the individual indigenous subject and the collective indigenous subject that acts within a local sphere but with the conscience that it is part of a collective whole, the great mansion that is the Universe, still poses a challenge to the universities. On the other hand, the indigenous thinking that "*we are part of a whole*", that the elements of nature and the Universe are also subjects, has interested many researchers, but is scarcely documented. That is to say, the environment is a living being. The brother hill, the grandmother moon, the water, the snake, the monkey, the birds, the fire, the air...are all part of a whole and are subjects of dialogue, of learning, and of interdependency in the indigenous world. This perspective of the research is what remains to be studied in more depth, given that all Western philosophic and scientific knowledge is by definition anthropocentric, ethnocentric and dichotomous.

*(e) The research generated synergy and a network of communication and collaboration between participant universities of Central and South America.*

EIBAMAZ and PROEIMCA played a key role in the contribution not only of financial and human resources but in the permanent support to disseminate the results among the participants. Researches from Bolivia, Ecuador, Peru, Guatemala, and Honduras became acquainted with each other and sought to strengthen links of cooperation. Their aim was not to impose truths with ethnocentric pretensions, but rather the opposite, to share and generate processes together.



## Final conclusions

Now we have databases, circulation of publications, results produced between the countries, coordination of activities between EIBAMAZ and PROEIMCA, and an academic and epistemological dialogue between those responsible for research in each country. Moreover, we know and have talks with government employees of Bolivia, Ecuador, Peru, Guatemala, and Honduras, who want to utilize the research results to formulate public policies. Parties from other countries, such as the Ministry of Education of Paraguay, have joined in our efforts. With this development, there is the promise of turning the challenges of a Department of Indigenous Education into concrete actions.

### *(f) The research reinforced regional policies.*

The participant countries are producing didactic books, text, and materials that are the fruit of the research process. In Guatemala, the book "El Encantamiento de la Realidad" ("The Enchantment of Reality") has been published. The students of Ecuador will publish 33 research theses in 2009. Bolivia has a summary just short of publication. Peru will begin the process of applying pedagogic measures. The EIBAMAZ regional office continues to put out a journal and studies of comparative analyses. Some problems of how to apply the results in education does not depend on the universities but on the ministries of education. Yet, we just might be on the path of pedagogic mediation, formulation of guidelines for the use of the contents in curricular matrices, elaboration of parallel texts, and generation of other financed proposals to draw up documents aimed at teachers and children.

## 2 Practical challenges for the future

### 2.1 Increasing the effects within and without the university

Among the challenges and aspects to be improved in the process, we can find the effect we should have in other areas of university life in connection with indigenous and interculturality themes. We can perceive that only scientific knowledge is favored in areas such as agriculture, medicine, etc, that are developed in the universities. There is no legitimacy or validation on the part of the universities to the authors of indigenous knowledge. Moreover, it could be possible that certain tendencies of the catholic religious power might lead to

the “satanization” of Mayan wisdom, not for being Mayan, but because it offers an alternative to the status quo dominion of thinking and spiritual life in Guatemala.

Yet, while it is true that CILA, PROEIB Andes, and the Department of intercultural studies of the Universidad de Cuenca are all thoroughly aware of and dedicated to the process, the universities in which they operate do not show interest in transforming this vision. The abovementioned participants should develop efforts to promote these studies and their results inside each faculty and transform the university, seeking allies and resources to continue pursuing similar topics. The authors, men and women, of indigenous knowledge might not write a book, which means that their names will not appear as bibliographical references. Consequently, they would almost never appear as referents. Is it then necessary to create another kind of a university for the indigenous persons, one that includes their knowledge?

## **2.2 Overcoming the unequal relations between university specialists and researchers of indigenous origin**

The unequal condition in terms of technical language, fees, and participation of the researchers of indigenous origin can be overcome. The indigenous researchers are generally defined as contact persons or indigenous representatives. These definitions have been useful and have showed their effectiveness in achieving an indigenous view on the research. Moreover, it has been argued that these researches feel *proud* of the denomination. Yet, this should not be a permanent state, because it could be argued that there is a wish to render an indigenous person inferior opposite a non-indigenous academic. This argument rests on the historic depreciation of the work and contribution of the indigenous peoples in all fields.

In contrast, someone could say that an indigenous person cannot be an academic, or cannot act as a principal researcher. Or even worse, someone could associate being indigenous to a determinism that by definition compares the *non*-indigenous with the academic person. This is to say, the denomination should not create an ambiguous and confusing precedent. Rather, we should reiterate that the participation and contribution of the indigenous way of thinking should comprise the line of work. Furthermore, the immediate needs of the indigenous versus the relatively low “payments” or fees that they receive from the universities as recognition of their labor could discourage them from remaining involved in the process.

### 2.3 Winning the resistance against change and racism

Despite the effort realized by the principal researchers, there are other persons in technical, administrative, and field levels that present resistance against changing from working on behalf of the indigenous peoples to working *with* them and *from* their point of view.

Even when the objectives of conducting the work from the cultural and mental horizon of the participants are clear, we cannot be blind to the relations of power that pervade the research. Those who have always enjoyed privilege and power in the use of time, the words, making decisions, and in the definition of projects simply do not want to let go of their positions. *"These 'Indians' already feel made equal. These 'Indians' think they have more rights than us"*, are expressions that are discriminatory and racist.

There are no doubt interviews and dialogues between different participants conducted in the indigenous language. It is also a fact that there are processes of arrangement based on the thinking of indigenous researchers and the communities. However, when there is no research evidence written in indigenous languages, or no university reports written 100% in an indigenous language, we could say that there is only partial research implemented in indigenous language. Moreover, we should not say that academic papers are more important than the dialogues or interviews that are conducted in social situations or collective meetings, such as in an indigenous market, an indigenous celebration, or an indigenous ceremony any given normal day. This research should by no means serve to reinforce reactionary monoculturalism and monolingualism.

### 2.4 Incorporating new matrices and categories

The matrices that try to show categories according to the cycle of life or biological development of an indigenous person do not yet incorporate what takes place before birth, that is to say, from the moment of conception, and neither is there a continuity reaching death and the events after death.

It is understandable that in order to achieve this approach we should develop a much wider and longer term research to be able to analyze results in depth. However, in different meetings we have stated that indigenous peoples' cycles of life do not begin with birth, but rather with the formation of the couple and the moment of conception. Other epistemological categories of the indigenous world, such as *the underworld, the mineral, vegetal, animal, and*

*human world, the world above and beneath*, etc. are categories given little treatment as of yet.

## **2.5 Contribution to the recognition of collective knowledge without pretensions to make it equal**

There remains much to identify and know about the sources of the collective thinking of indigenous persons and peoples. Thus, in addition to having Aristotle, Descartes, Hegel, Kant, Nietzsche, Foucault, Popper, Kuhn, Laudan, and other rather respected authors as references, it is necessary that, as far as indigenous knowledge and wisdom is concerned, there is reference to the collective ideas of: the Incas, the Mayas, the Shipibos, Jun Ajpu and Ixbalamke, Grandmother Ixpiyacok, Gerónimo, Jefe "Chief" Seattle, Cochise, Crazy Horse, Black Hawk, Vine Deloria, Chilam Balam, Bartolina Sisa, Tupak Katari, Antonio Pop Caal, Tecun Uman, and to the more recent ones such as Rigoberta Menchu or Luis Montaluisa.

Likewise, we should look for formats of how to make the Earth (mother), the father (the Sun), the brothers and sisters (the stars, plants, hills), the grandmother (the Moon), and the great mansion, the Universe, as valid sources and references of indigenous knowledge.

## **3 Final observations**

To possess the view of indigenous peoples, their millennial knowledge, and their values in the multidimensionality of life forms a constant challenge that involves the indigenous peoples and all men and women who work for human rights, the production and reproduction of knowledge, and the training of new intercultural citizens.

From our part as EIBAMAZ and PROEIMCA, it is a question of a battle for the transformation of the processes, policies, strategies, and the administration of the education systems. We fight for the education not to continue being an instrument of ideological domination, culturally ethnocentric, epistemologically Western, outmoded, autocratic, discriminatory of the ancestral knowledge and wisdom, and bearing no relation with the economic, social, cultural, and political reality of the indigenous peoples.

We seek to establish a new relation of power, to contribute into a new world order, to achieve a way of sharing the power in order to guarantee a

good living for everyone, for the indigenous peoples and for humanity. We will continue with our commitment to human rights for all and to the respect of the indigenous peoples' way of thought.

In the fourth introductory chapter of the UN Declaration (2007) on the Rights of the Indigenous Peoples, it is reaffirmed that: *"all doctrines, policies and practices based on or advocating superiority of peoples or individuals on the basis of national origin or racial, religious, ethnic or cultural differences are racist, scientifically false, legally invalid, morally condemnable and socially unjust"*.

With this declaration, at a global level, those doctrines, policies, and practices that have been the source of injustices against indigenous peoples are denounced and, in a manner, condemned. From that perspective, the EIBAMAZ regional project on intercultural and bilingual education sums up the global aspiration for human rights of indigenous peoples, and it will support all efforts aiming for the indigenous peoples of the Amazonian region never to suffer anymore *"from historic injustices as a result of, inter alia, their colonization and dispossession of their lands, territories and resources, thus preventing them from exercising, in particular, their right to development in accordance with their own needs"*, interests and epistemology (ibid.).

It will probably be necessary to continue working for the epistemological dialogue between diverse persons, peoples, and cultures. We need to continue pledging for the respect of and the pacific coexistence between languages and cultures, but without setting aside the battle against the inequalities and relations of economic, social, political, and cultural power that could affect the development of the indigenous peoples and their children.

We will seek equality where there are social imbalances and exclusions to human rights, but we will also proclaim the right to being different whenever equality seeks to dominate and make the material and spiritual life of indigenous children, peoples, and nationalities disappear.

*Nimalej Matyox, ruk'ux k'aj, ruk'ux ulew, matyox tat nan.*

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## List of abbreviations

1. EIBAMAZ, Program of Intercultural Bilingual Education in the Amazonia in Ecuador, Bolivia and Perú.
2. PROEIMCA, Program of Intercultural Multilingual Education in Central America
3. MOSEIB, Model of the system of Intercultural Bilingual Education (Ecuador)
4. AMEIBE, Aplicación of MOSEIB in the Amazonia. Ecuador
5. INRA, National Institute of Agrarian Reform, Bolivia
6. TOC, *Tierras Comunitarias de Origen*, Bolivia
7. CEPO, Education Council of Original Peoples
8. PROEBANDES, Training Program in Intercultural Bilingual Education in the Andean Countries.
9. UMSS, *Universidad Mayor de San Simón*
10. DINEIB, National Direction of Intercultural Bilingual Education, Ecuador
11. DIPEIB, Provincial Direction of Intercultural Bilingual Education, Ecuador.
12. UC, *Universidad de Cuenca*
13. UNICEF, United Nations Children's Fund
14. DINEBI National Direction of Bilingual Intercultural Education, Perú
15. DINEIBIR, National Direction of Intercultural Bilingual and Rural Education, Perú
16. GOREU, Regional Government of Ucayali, Perú
17. PER-U, Regional Educational Project of Ucayali, Perú
18. PNIA, National Plan for the Infancy and Adolescents
19. UGEL, Local Educational Management Unit, Perú
20. INEI, National Institute of Statistics and Informatics, Perú
21. ISPB, Pedagogical Institute of Yarinacocha, Perú
22. DRE, Regional Educational Direction, Perú
23. AIDSEP, Interethnic Association for Development of the Peruvian rainforest
24. ORAU, Regional Organisation of AIDSEP in Ucayali
25. FORMABIAP, Teacher Training in the speciality of primary intercultural bilingual education, Perú
26. UNMSM, *Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos*
27. UNIA, *Universidad Nacional Intercultural de la Amazonía Peruana*
28. ILO, International Labor Organisation
29. PNUD, United Nation Development Program
30. CNEM, National Council of Mayan Education, Guatemala
31. DIGEBI, General Direction of Bilingual Education, Guatemala
32. ILE, Institute of Linguistic and Education, Guatemala
33. EIB, Intercultural Bilingual Education
34. EBI, Bilingual Intercultural Education
35. EIIP, Intracultural, Intercultural and Plurilingual Education
36. MAEF, Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs
37. PROEMBI, Multiplier Project of Mayan Bilingual Intercultural Education, Guatemala.
38. URL, *Universidad Rafael Landívar de Guatemala*







